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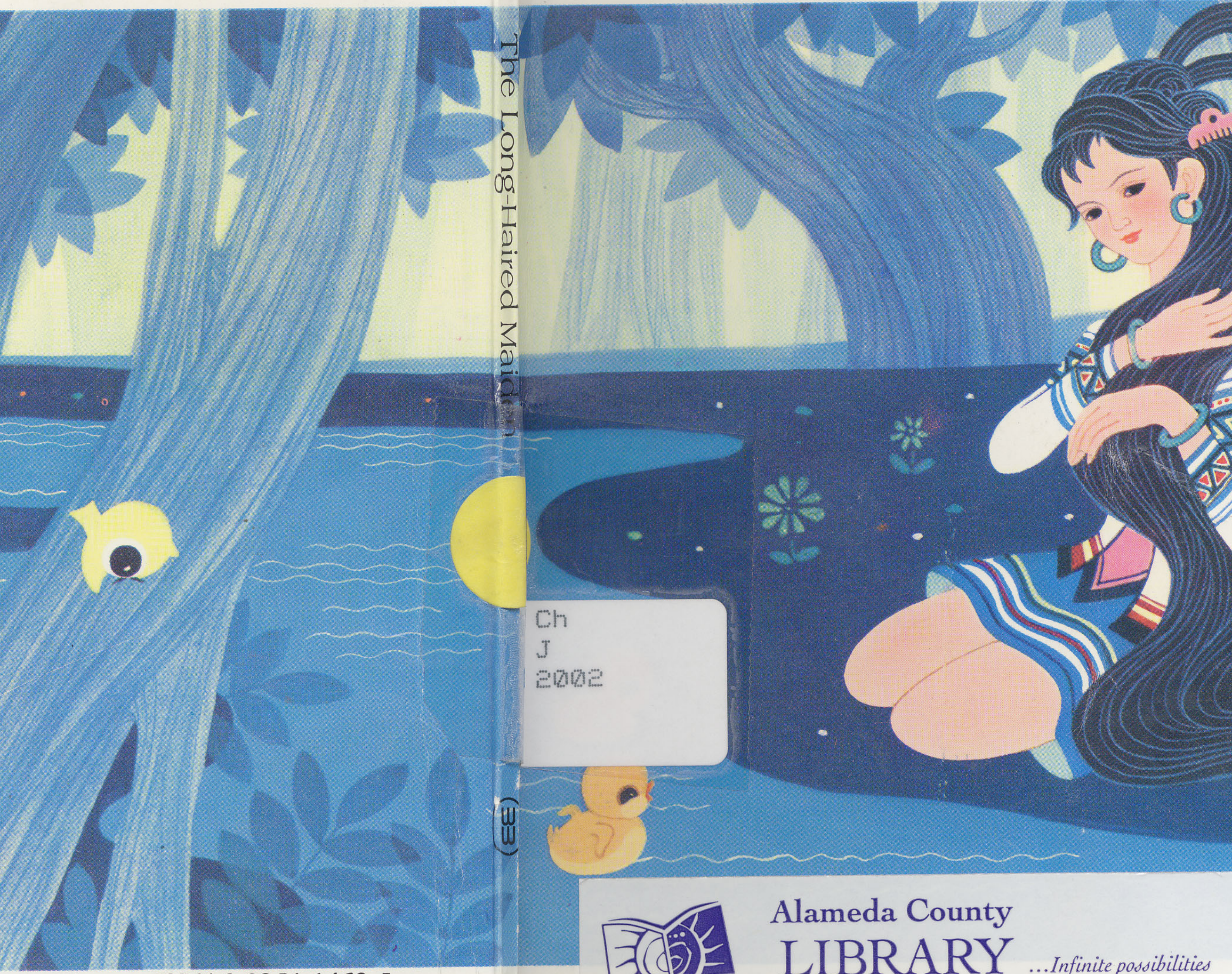

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CHINESE FOLK STORY

The Long-Haired Maiden

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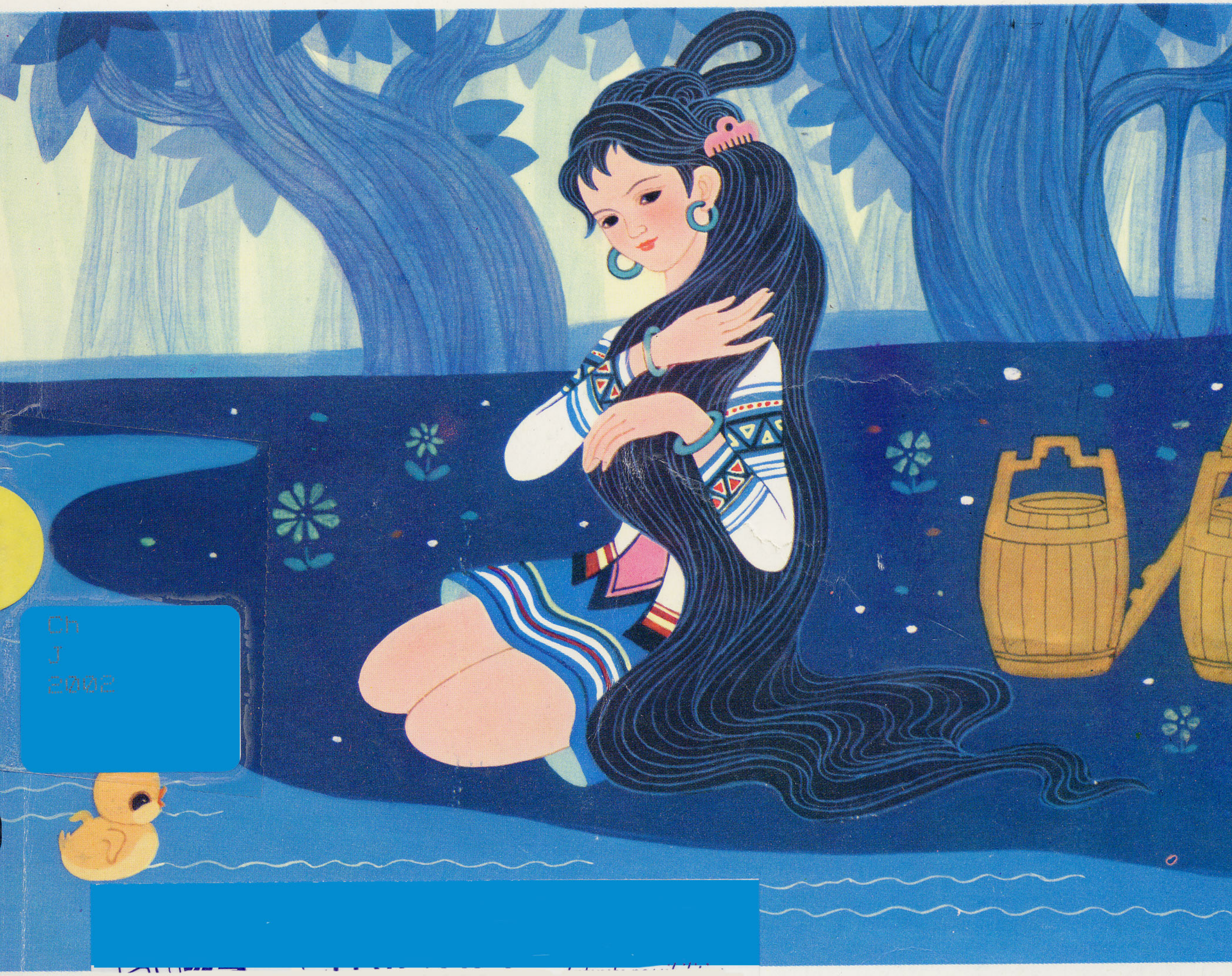
CHINESE FOLK STORY

The Long-Haired Maiden



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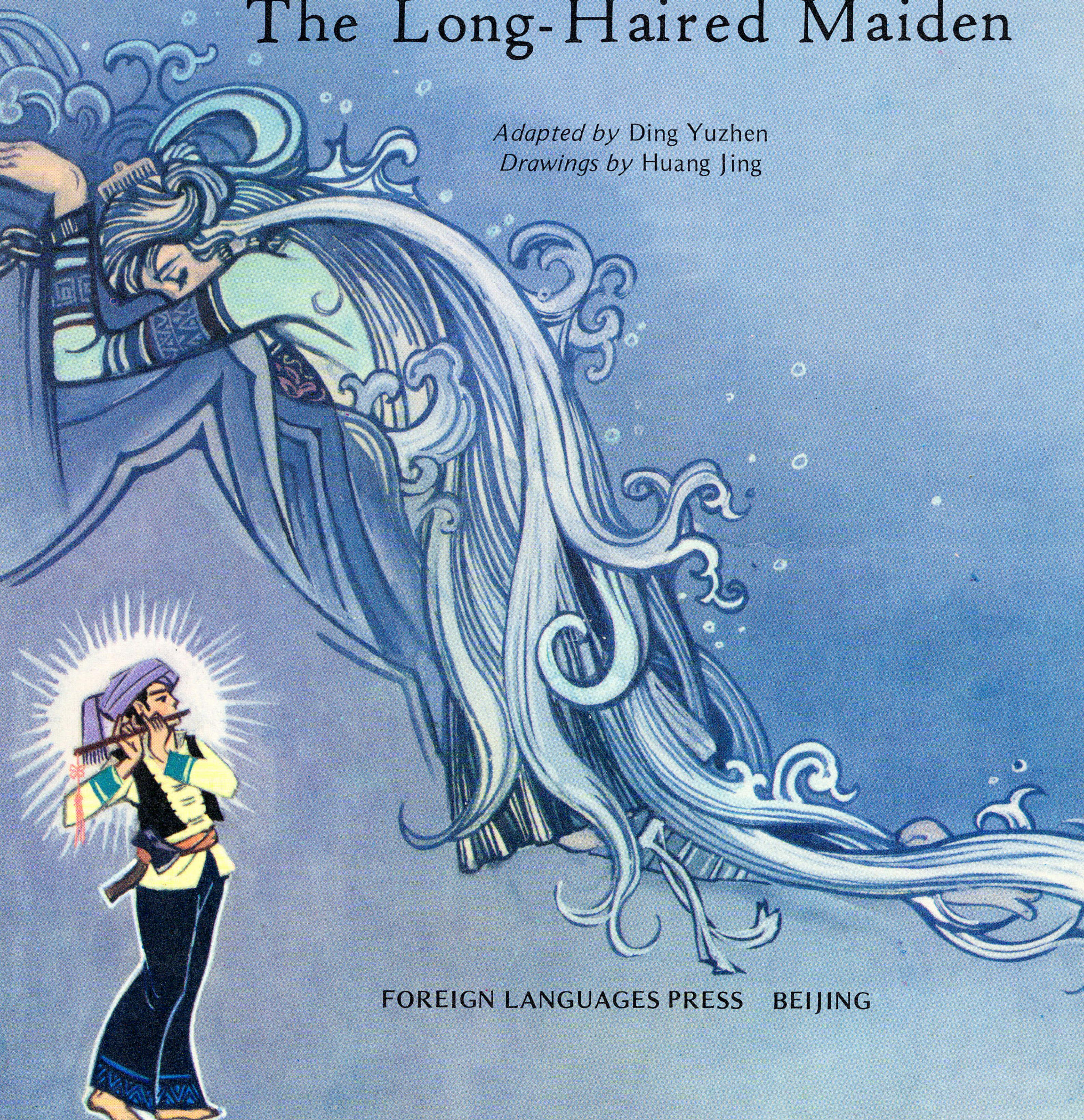
The Long-Haired Maiden

Adapted by Ding Yuzhen
Drawings by Huang Jing



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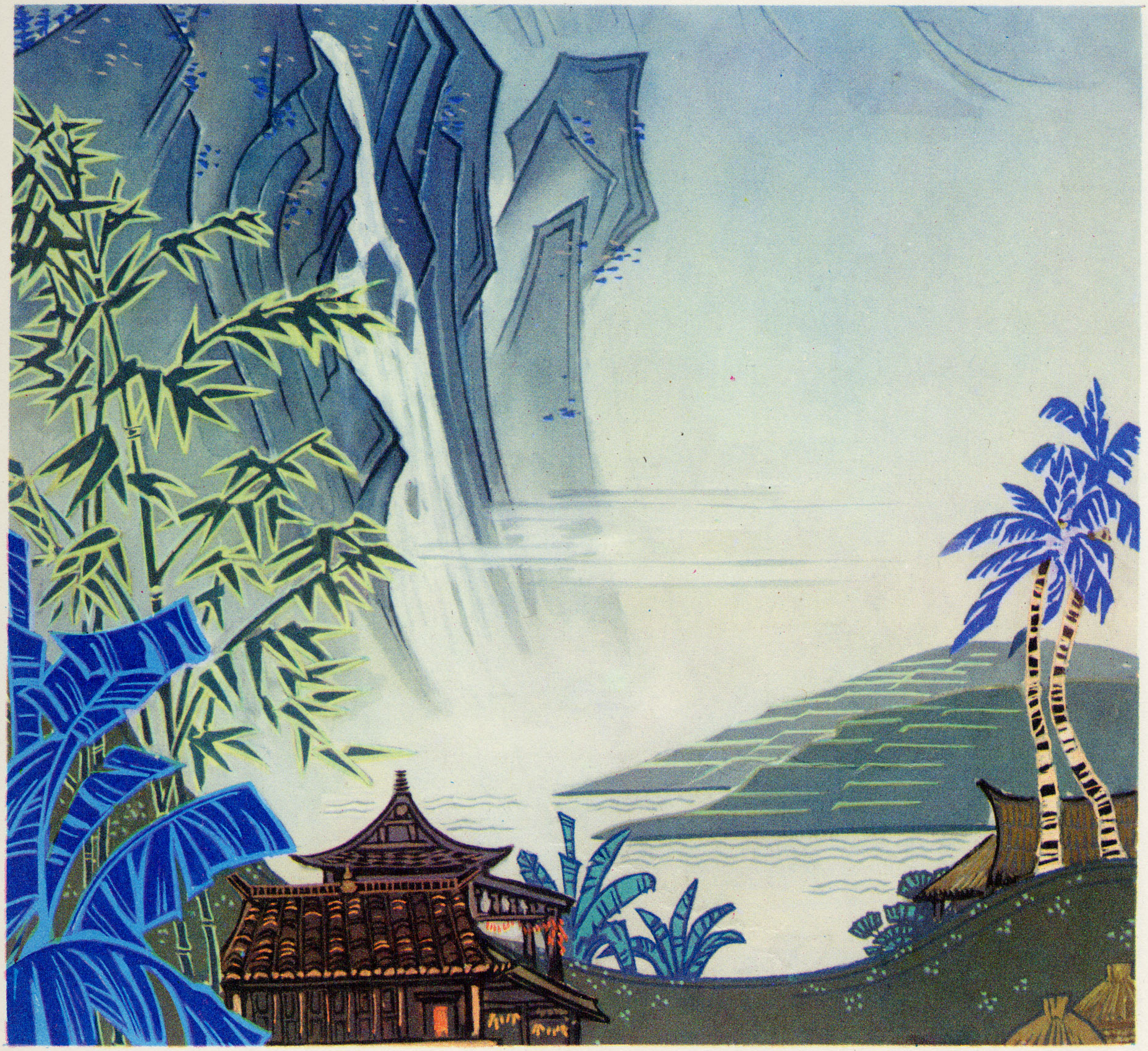
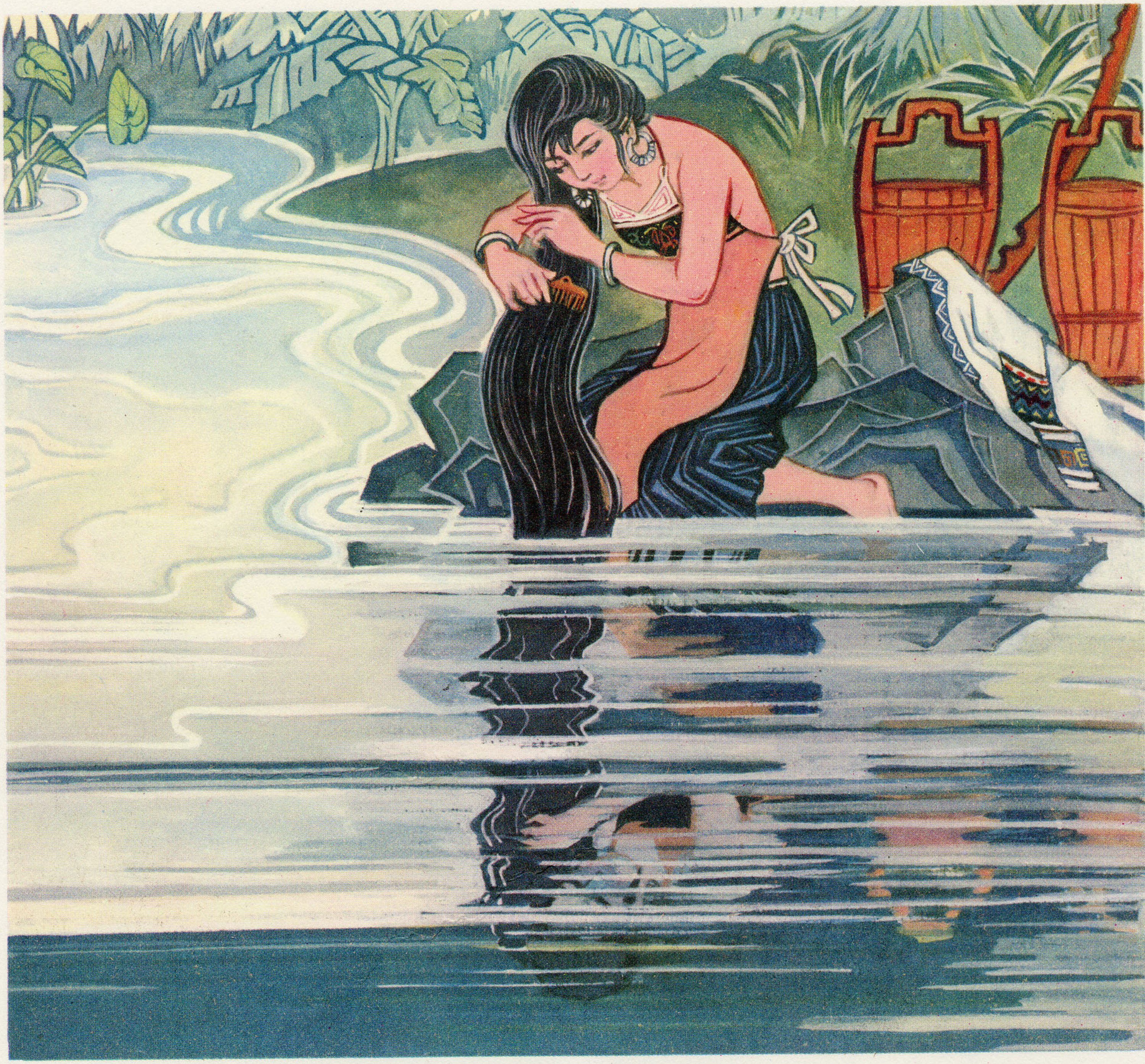
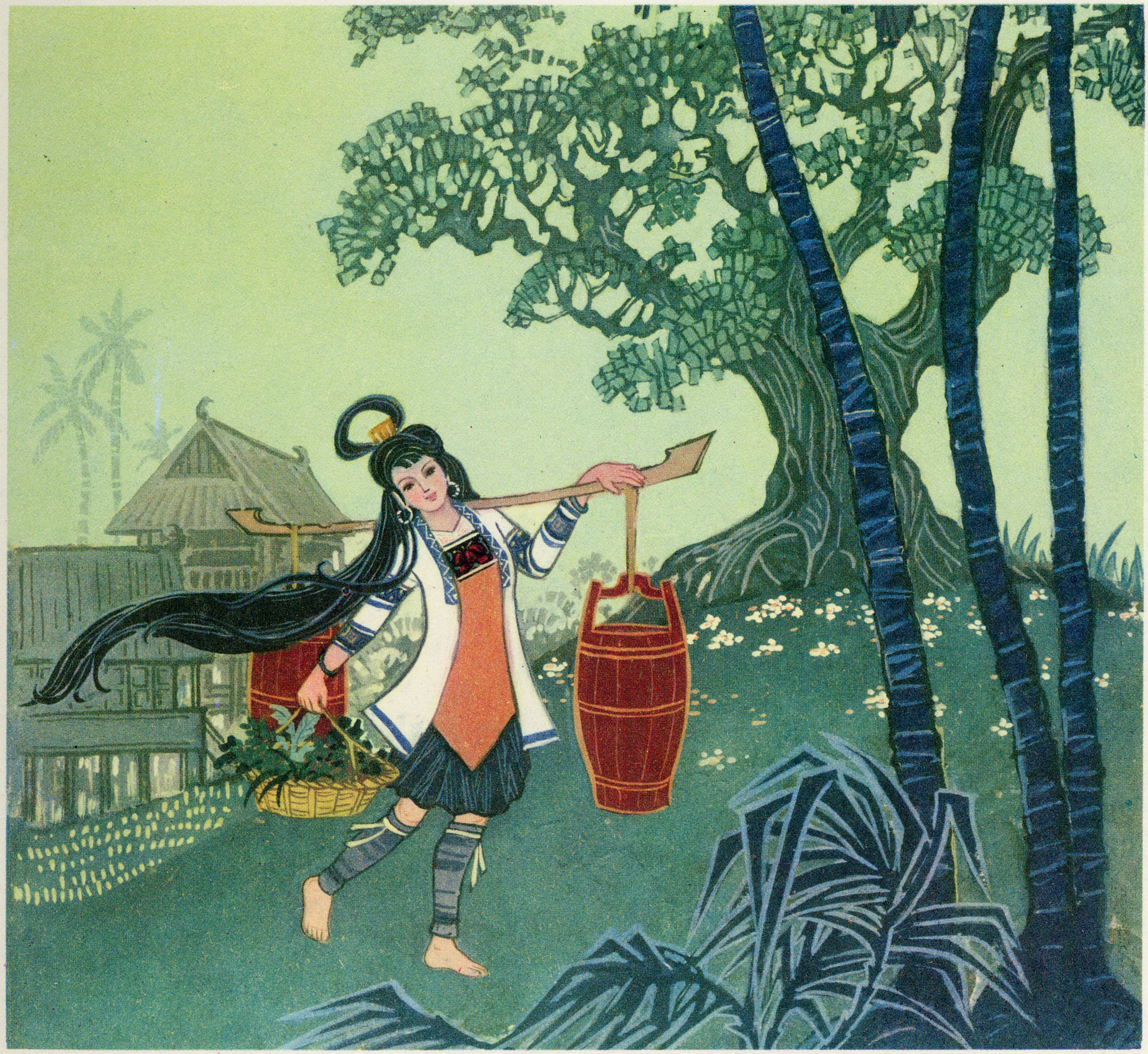


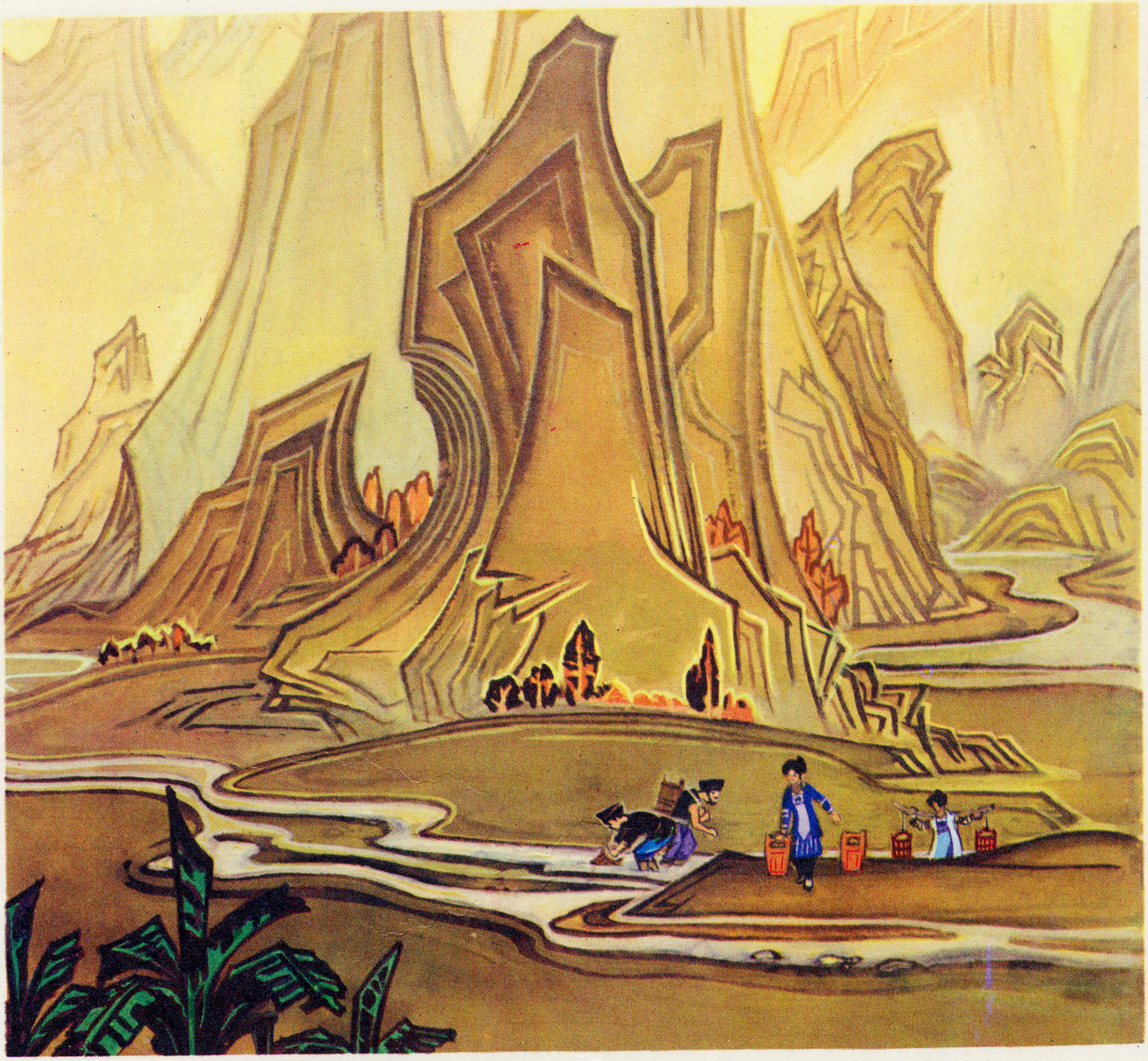
The story takes place in a mountain village in South China, where the Dong people lived. Long, long time ago, there was a high mountain behind the village. Down from the mountain flowed a fresh and sweet spring, watering the terraced fields on the lower slopes.



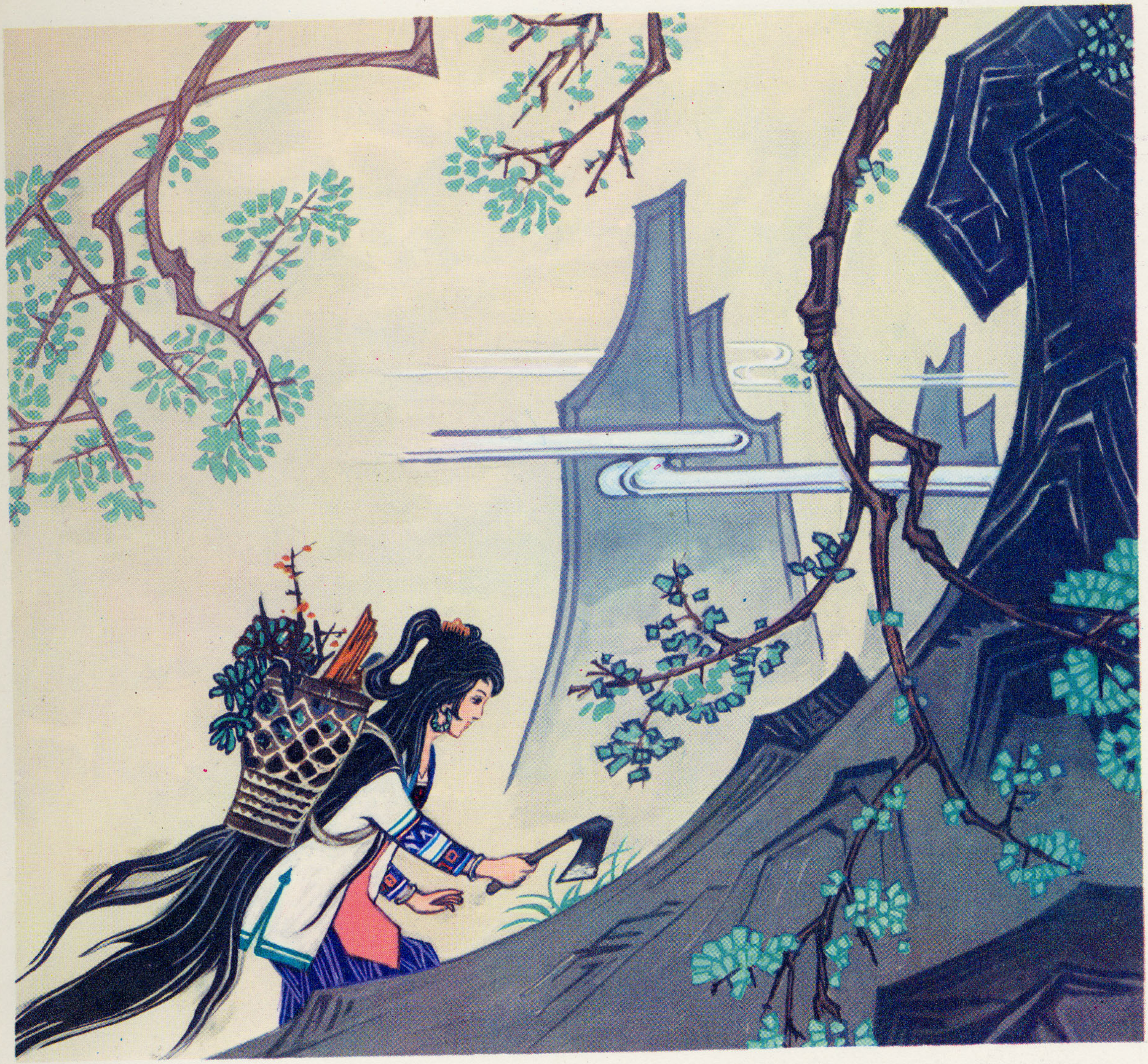
In the village, there was a beautiful young girl known as the Long-Haired Maiden whose glossy black hair ran from head to foot like the clear spring itself.



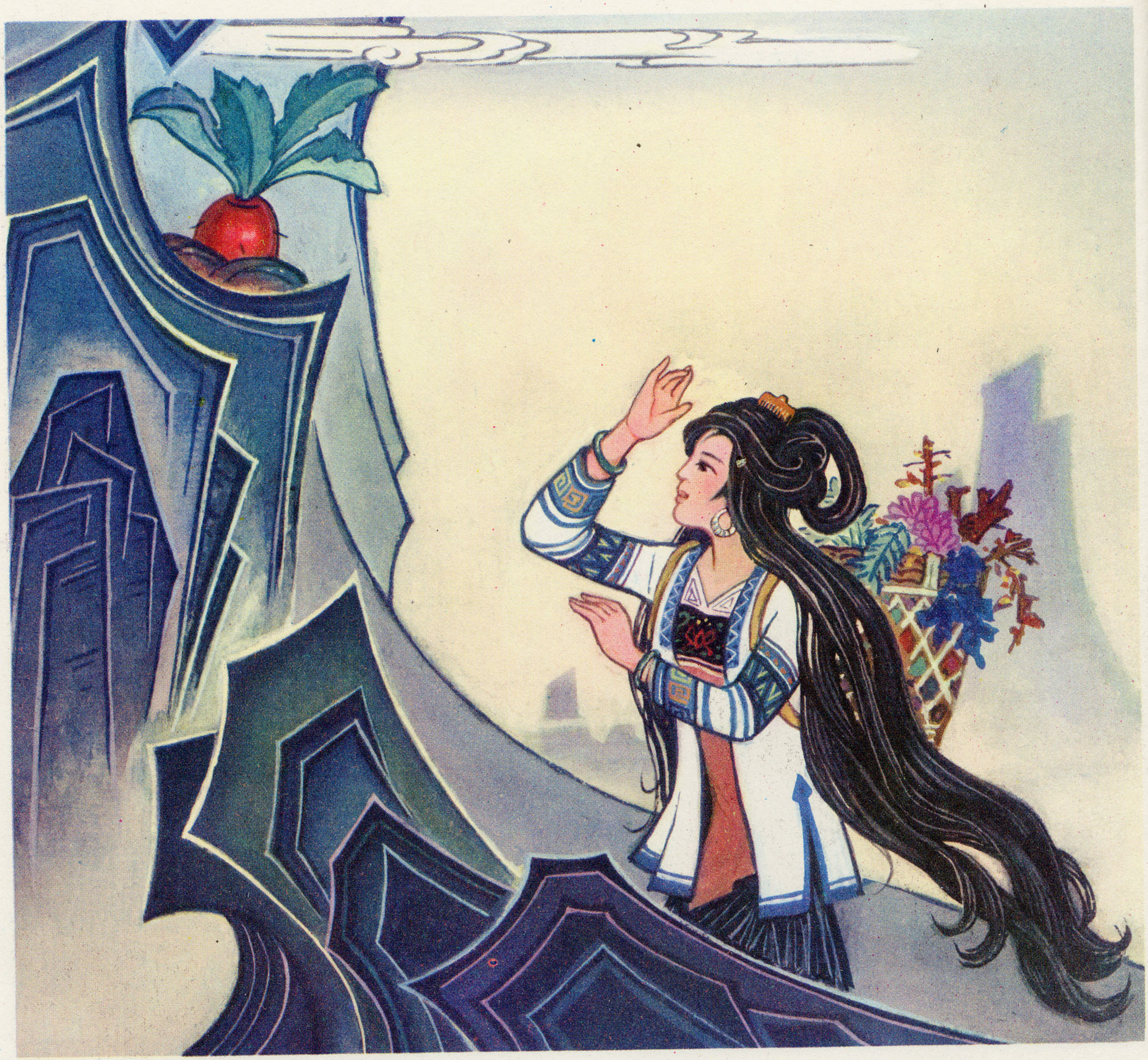
The cheerful Long-Haired Maiden loved to sing and also loved to work. Everyday she was busy carrying water, gathering firewood, raising pigs and planting vegetables. Everyone said that she was a good girl.



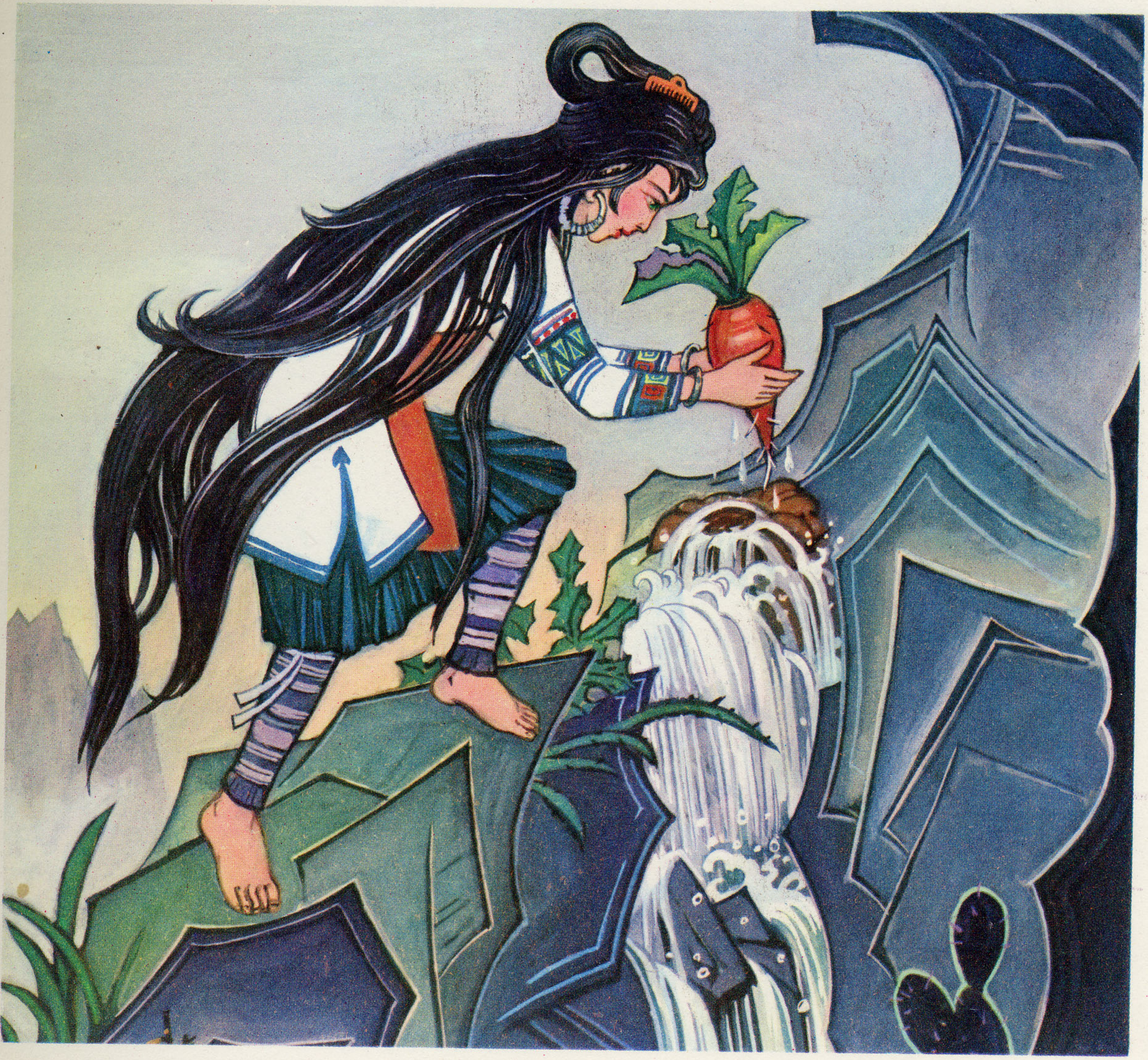
One day, the spring dried up suddenly. All the fields lay in waste, and the plants withered. The villagers had to go three miles away to fetch water.



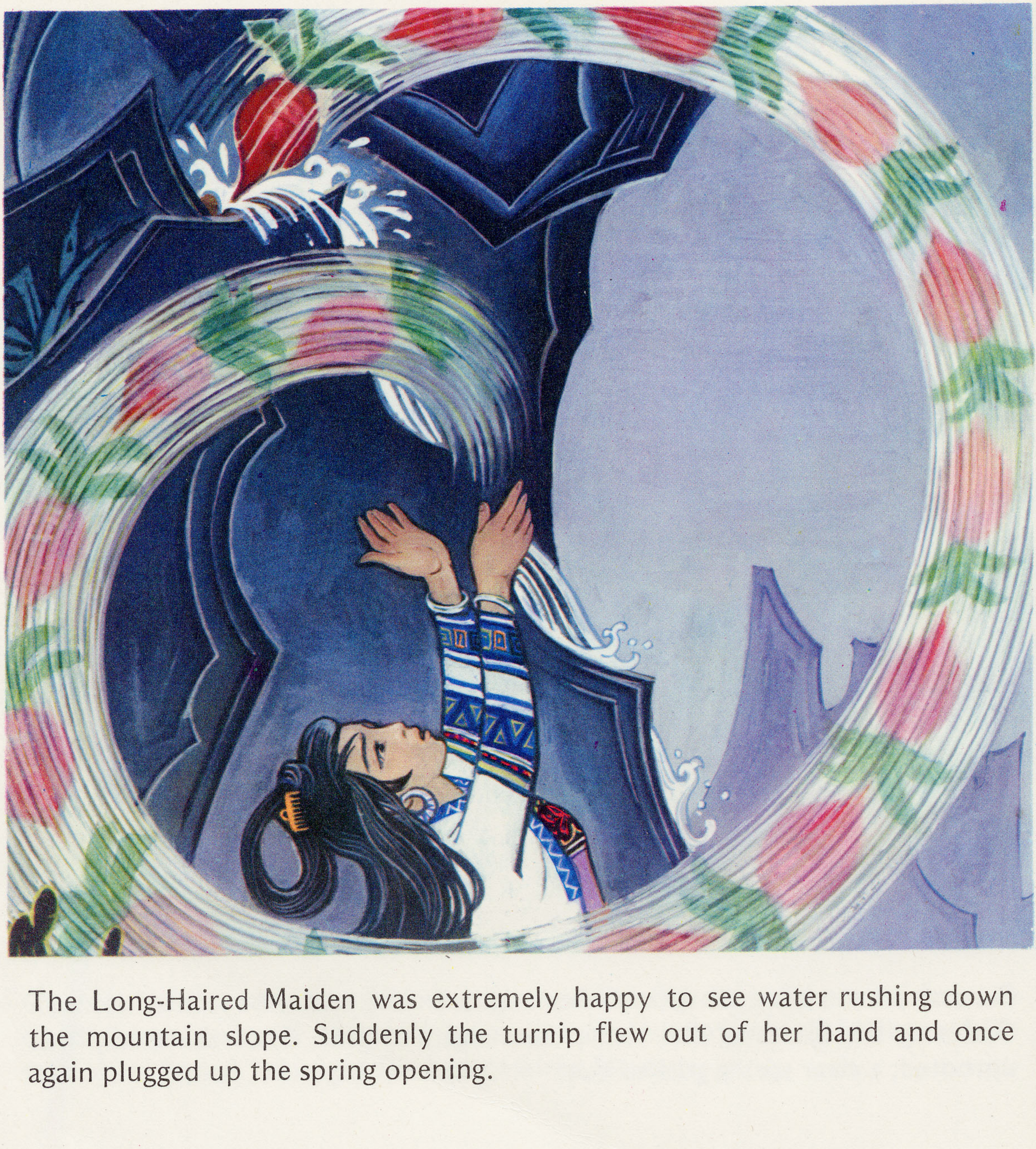
Besides fetching water from afar, the Long-Haired Maiden had to dig wild herbs high up from the mountain to feed the pigs.



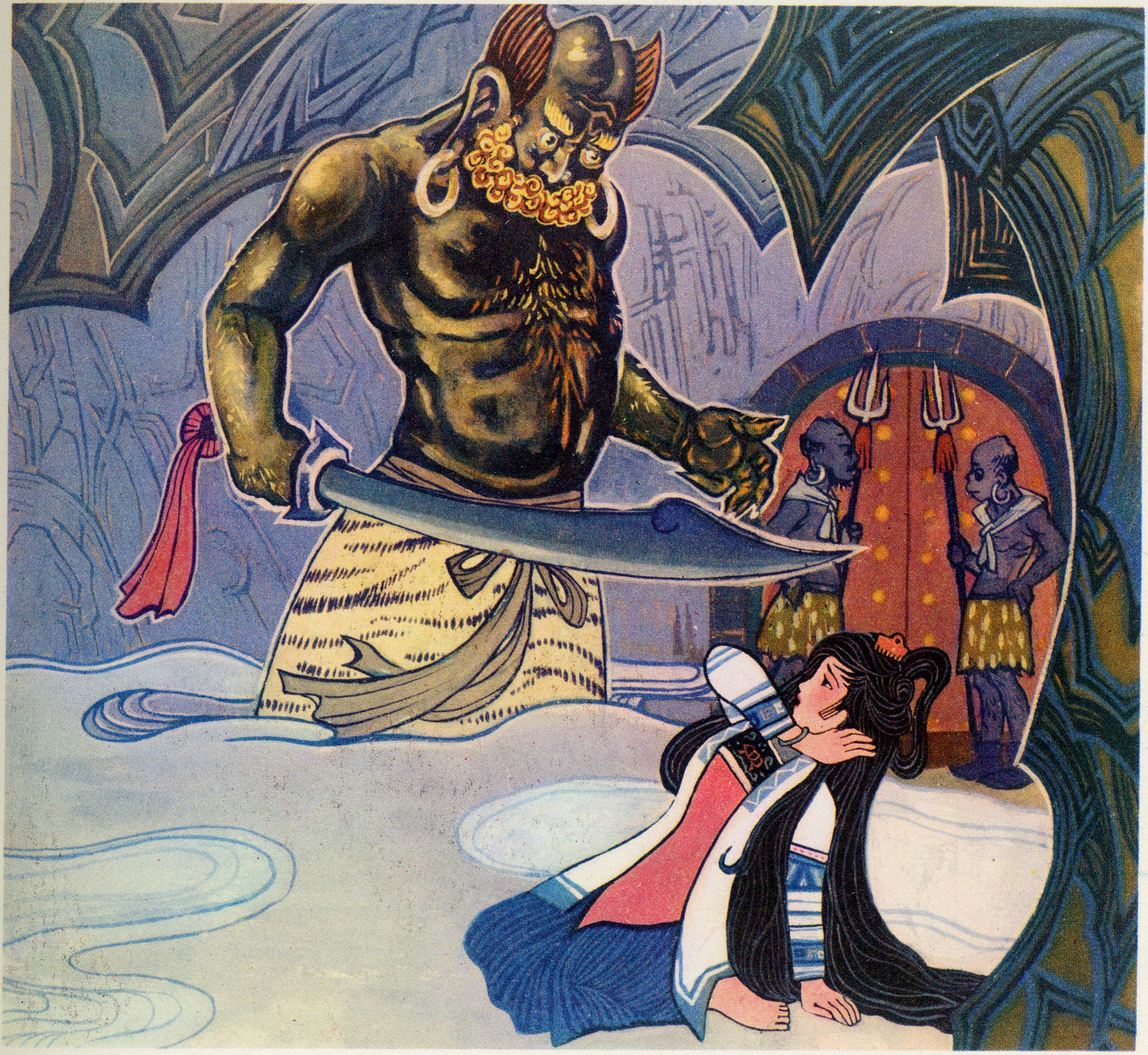
One day on her way to a faraway mountain to dig out wild plants, she saw on the slope a cluster of turnip leaves shining in jade green. "If only could I take them home!" thought the Long-Haired Maiden.



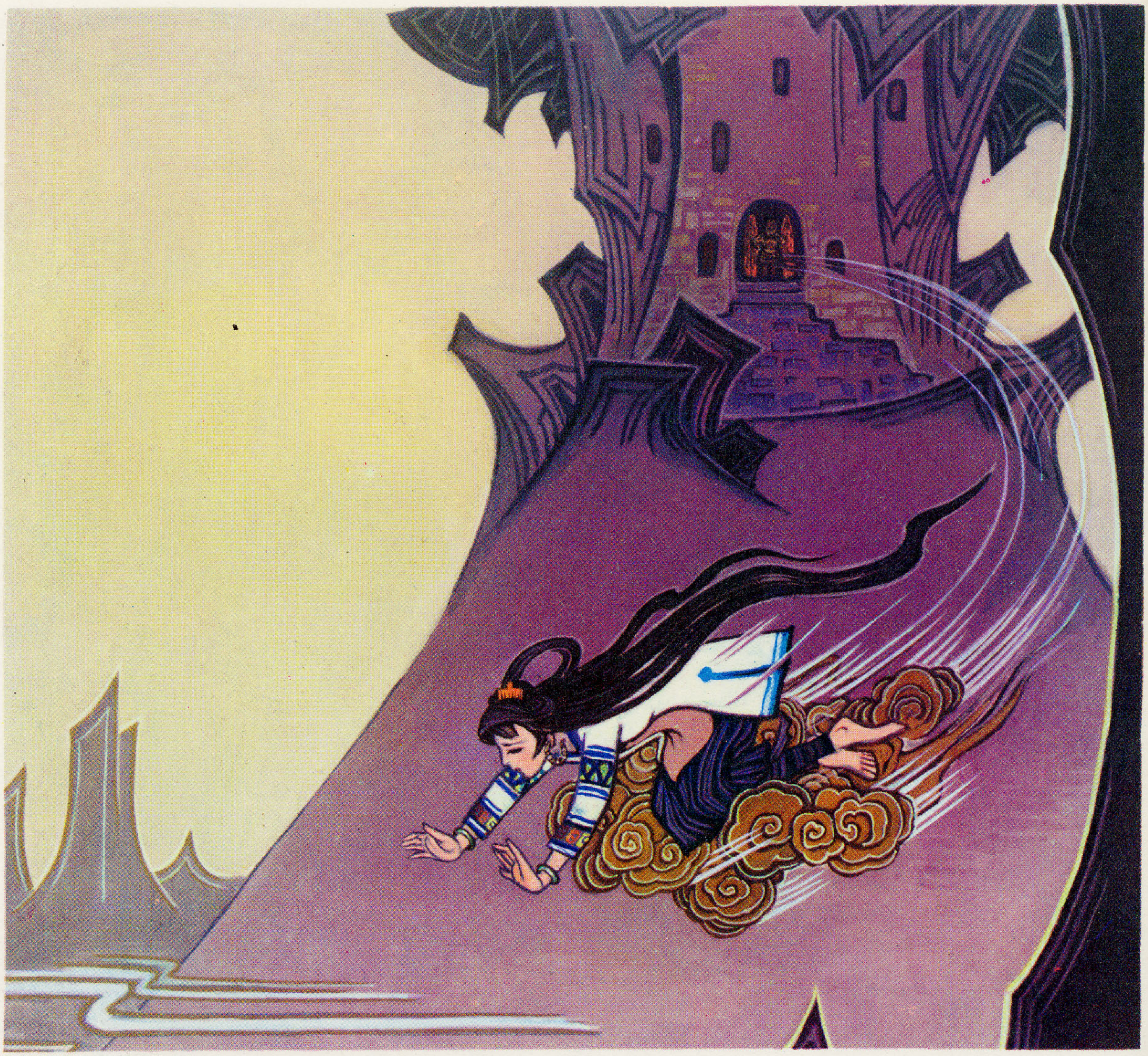
On and on she climbed with all her might. In the end she reached the top. Grabbing the leaves of the turnip she began to pull. Once the turnip was uprooted, a clear spring gushed out.



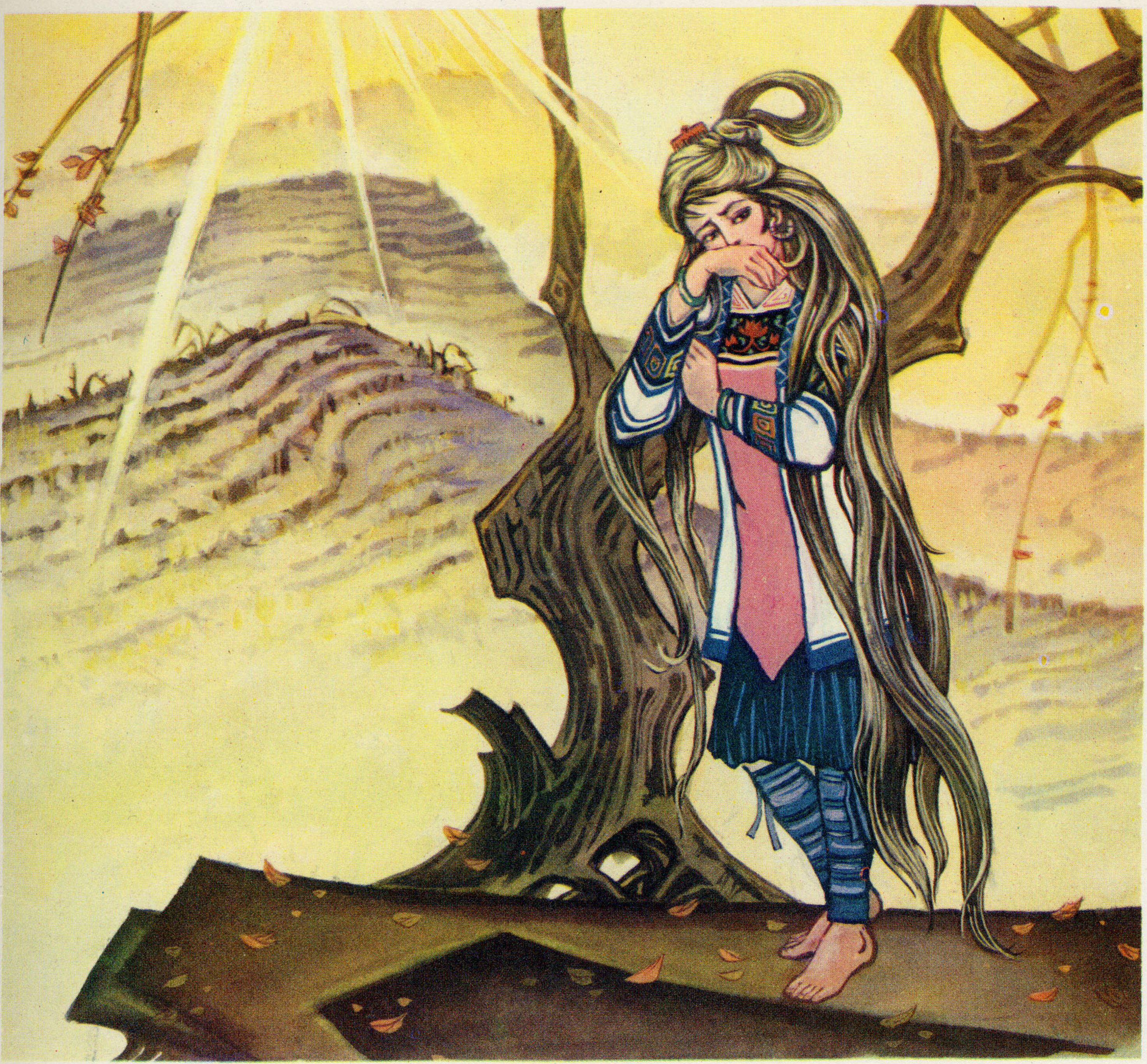
The Long-Haired Maiden was extremely happy to see water rushing down the mountain slope. Suddenly the turnip flew out of her hand and once again plugged up the spring opening.



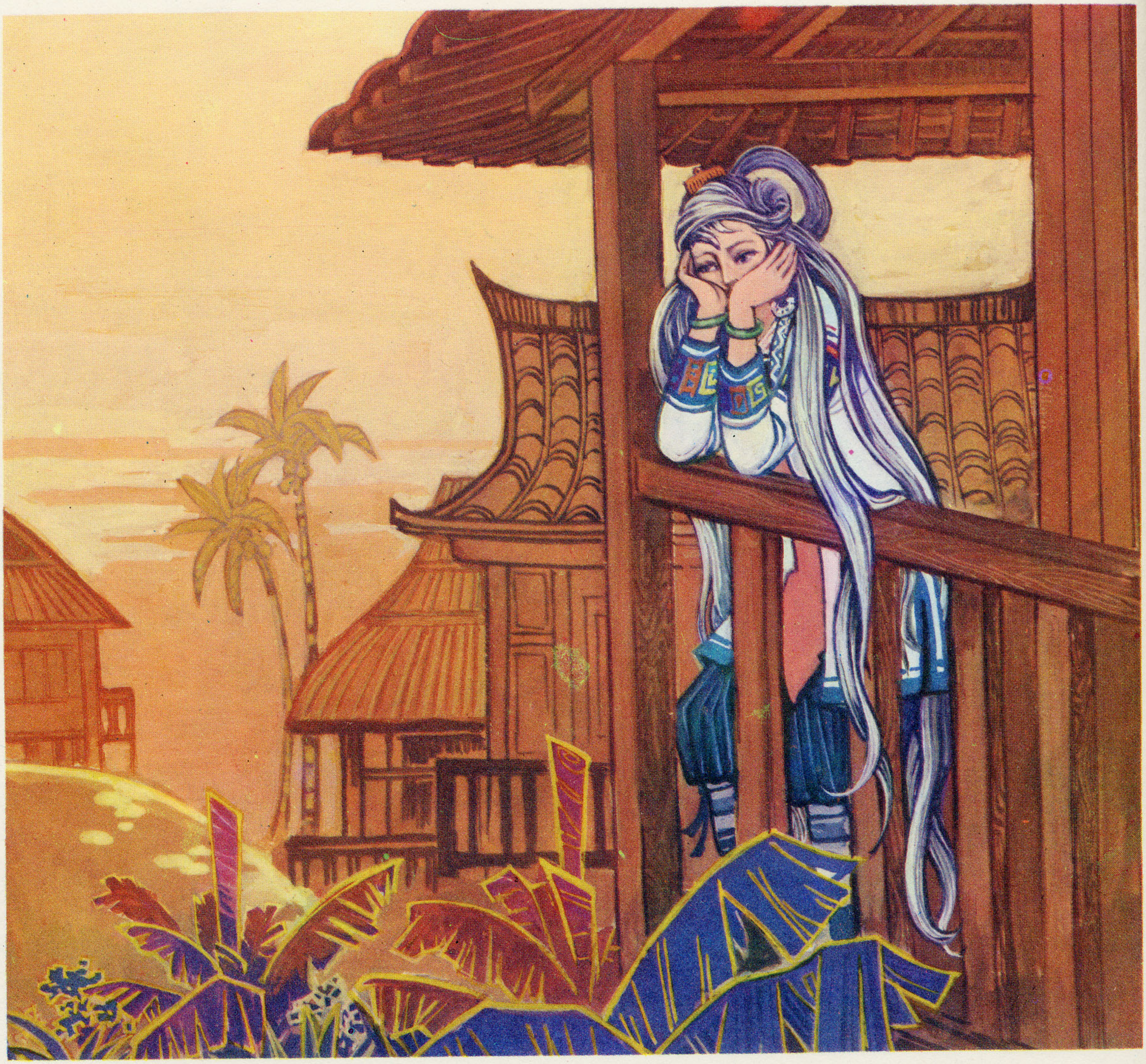
Instantly a gale of strong wind blew her into a dark cave. There came the threat of the Mountain God whose body was covered with yellowish hair. "I'll kill you," he said, "if you tell anyone else about this spring water."



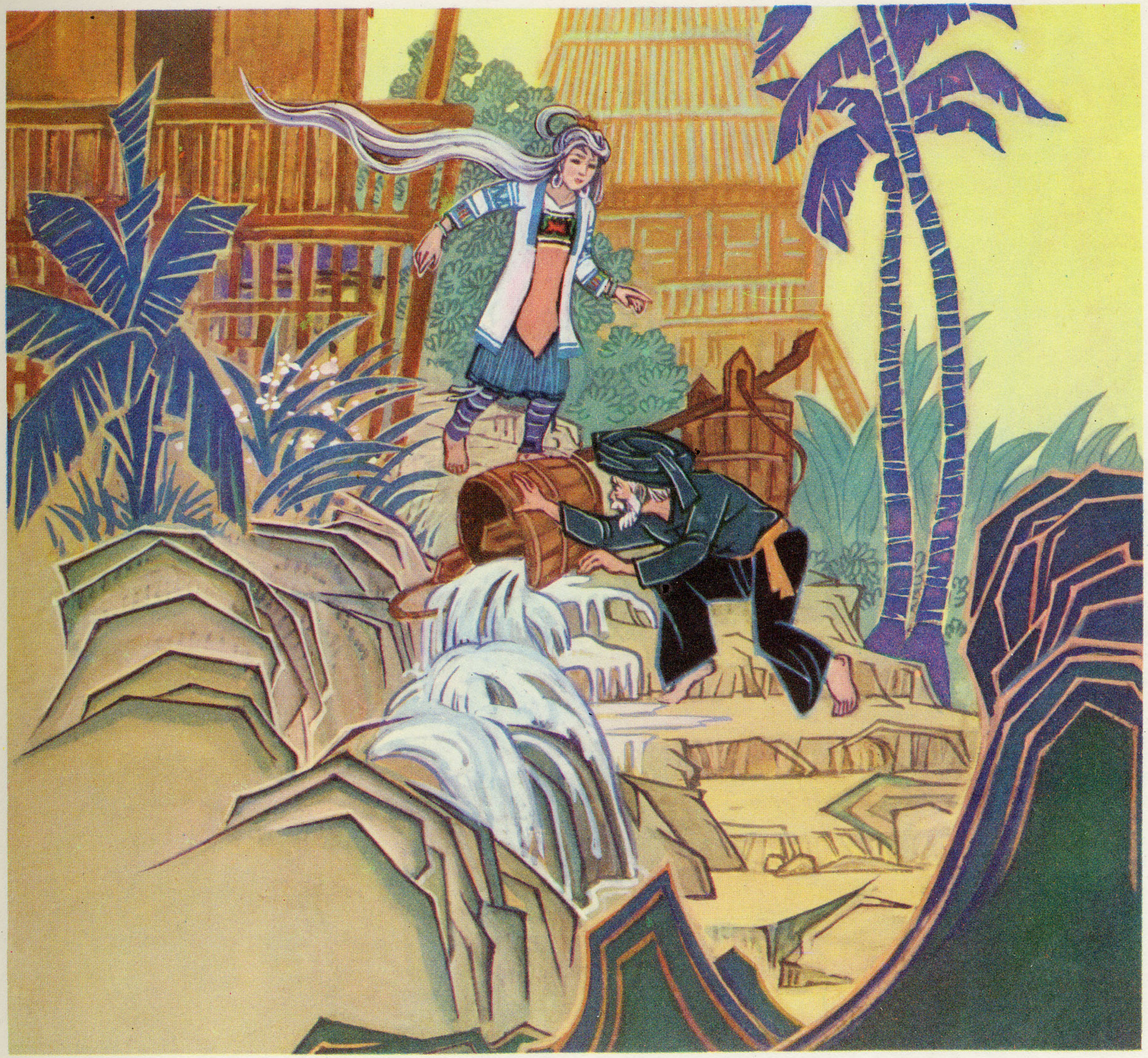
Before the Long-Haired Maiden could open her mouth in response, another gale of wind blew her out of the cave, up to the sky and finally landed her at the foot of the mountain again.



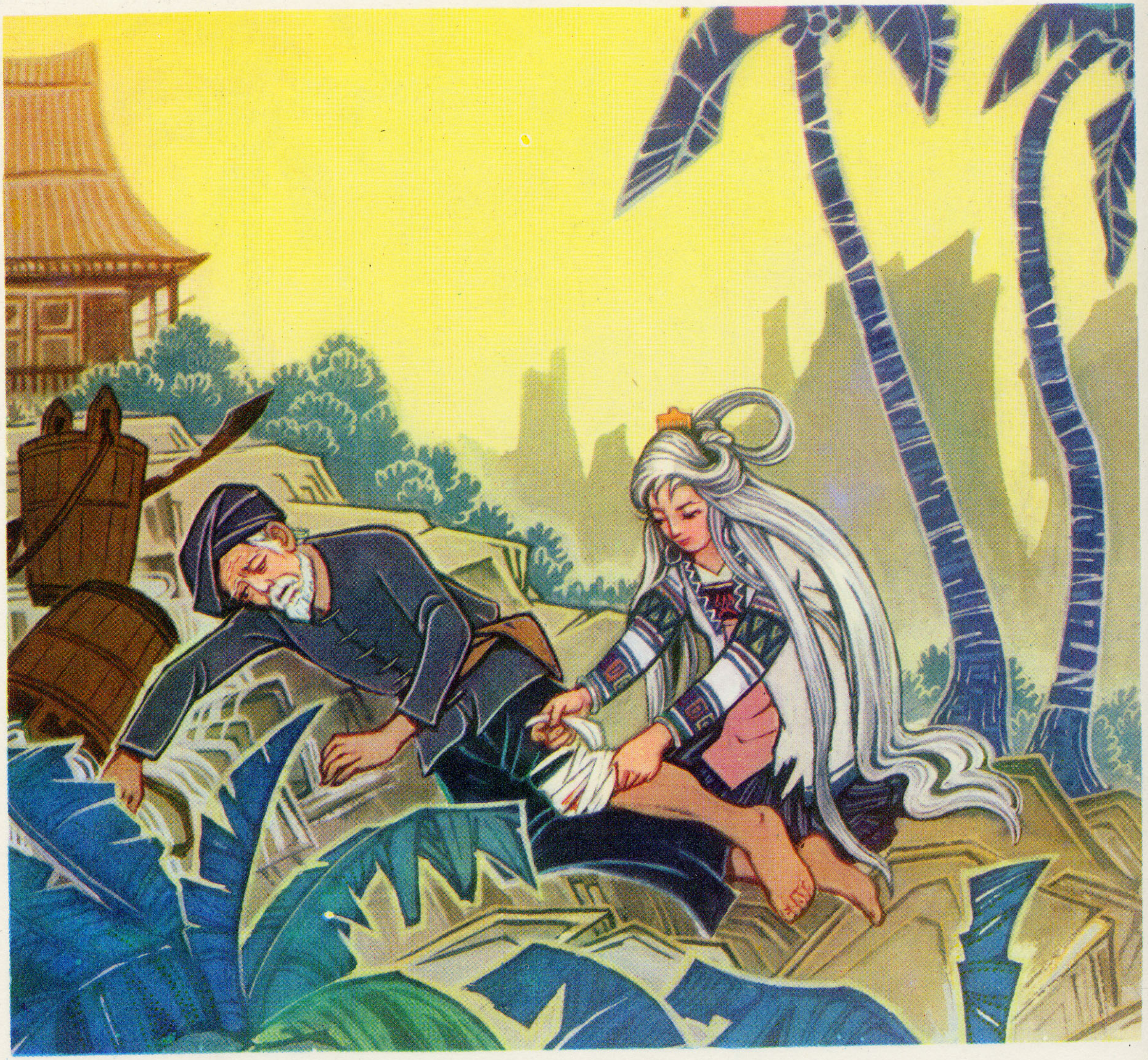
Back at home the Long-Haired Maiden didn't dare to reveal the secret of the mysterious spring. However, the dried-up land and the withered crops constantly troubled her. She was so worried that she was losing weight each day, and her hair turned yellowish pale.



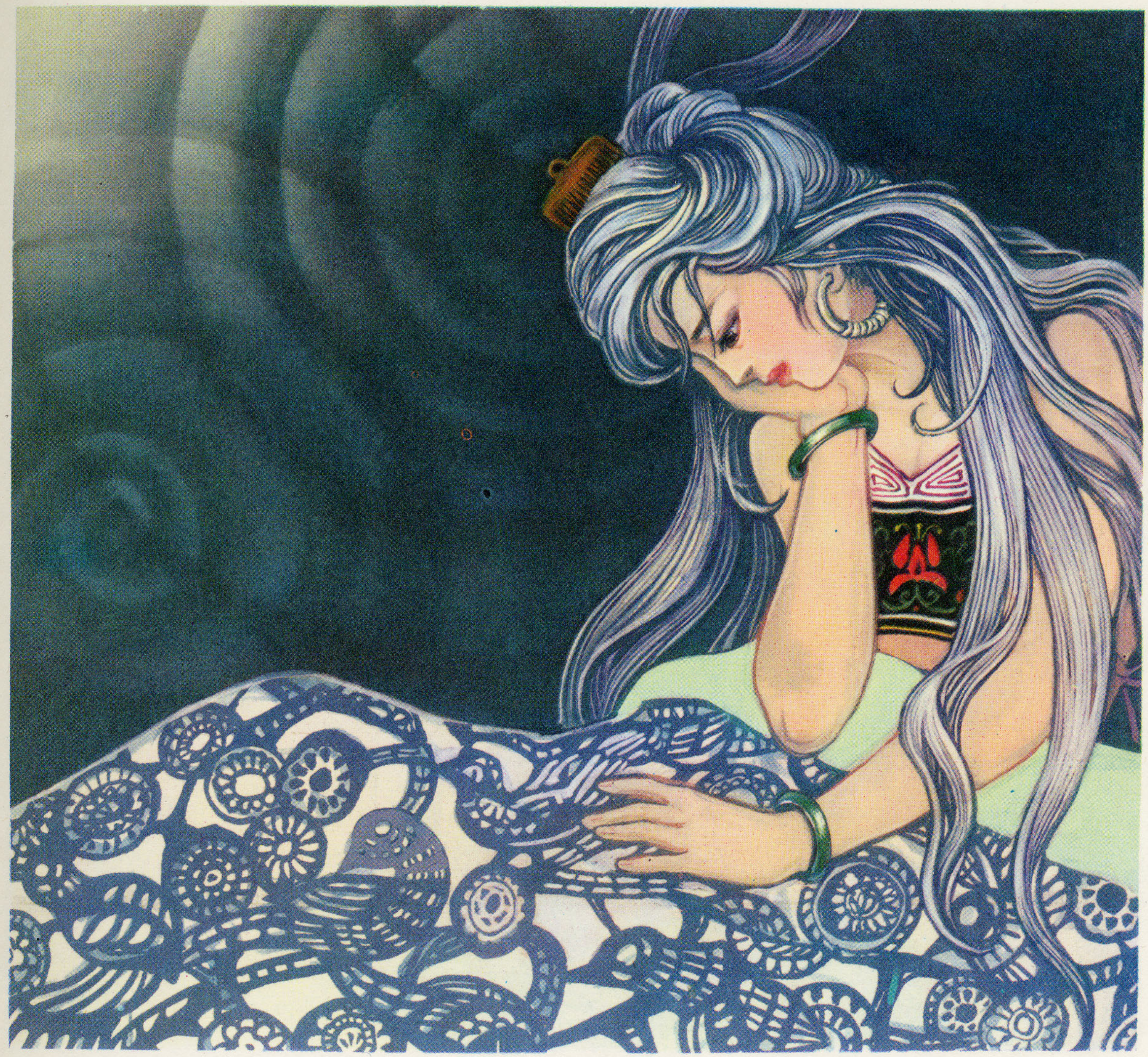
The secret of the spring weighed heavily upon her heart as each day passed by. She was so burdened by grief that her eyes lost their luster and her hair turned snow-white.



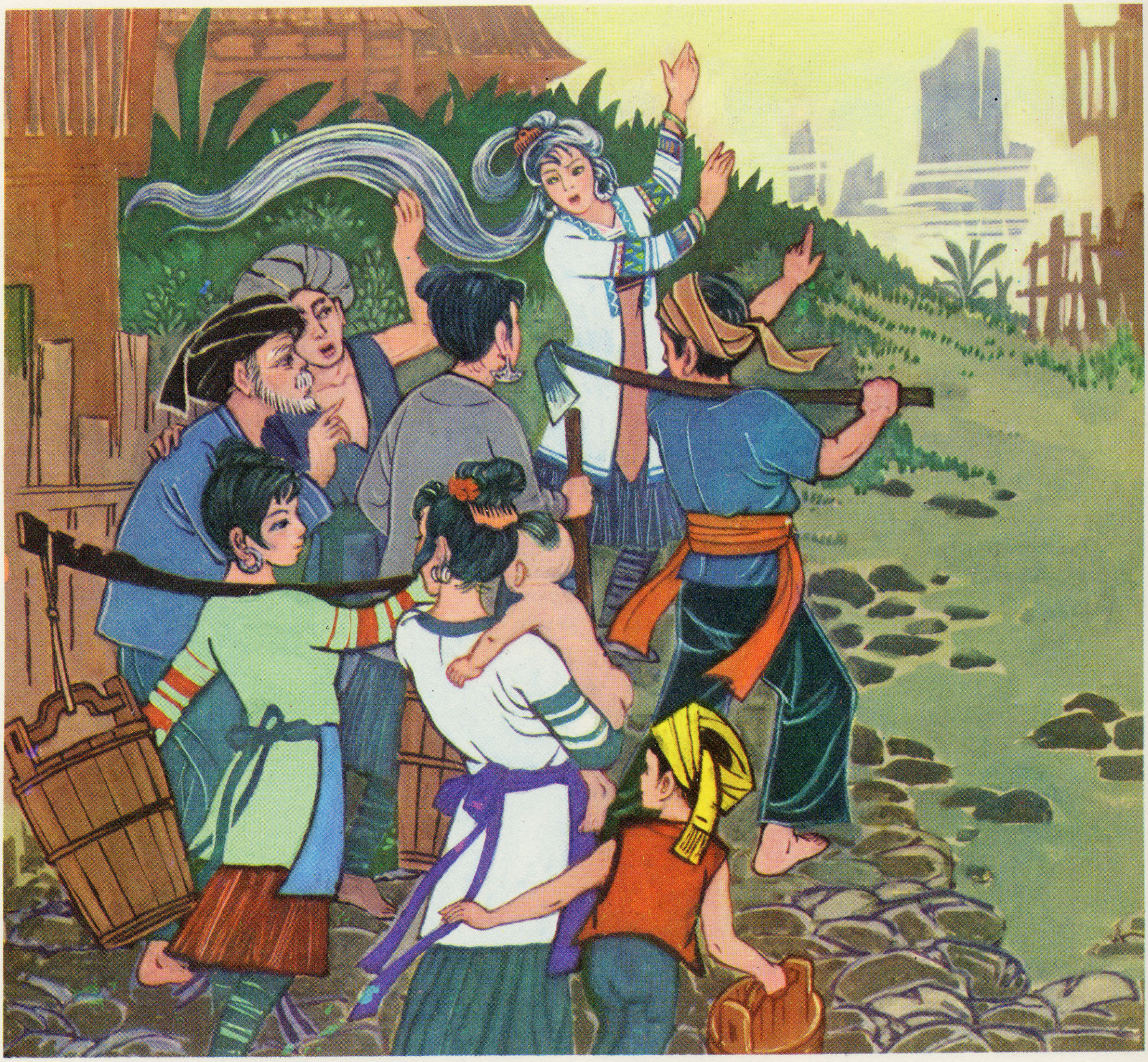
One day, Xiao Yong's father, a next door neighbour of the Long-Haired Maiden, slipped on the steps while carrying water to his home. "Water! Water!" the old man cried out in despair, totally unconscious of his own pain.



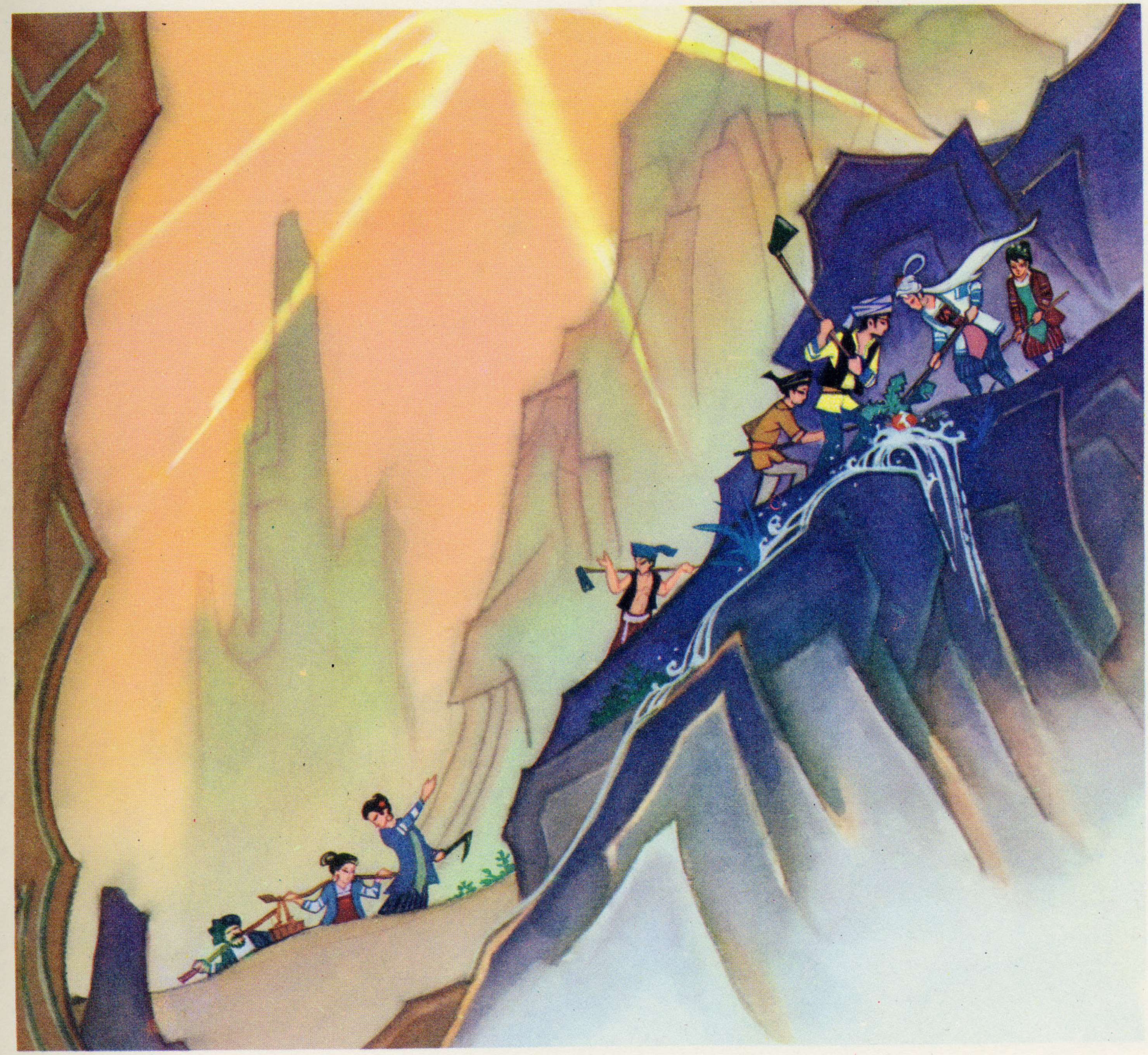
The Long-Haired Maiden rushed towards the old man to try to bandage his leg. Seeing the old man's teary face, she herself was also heartbroken.



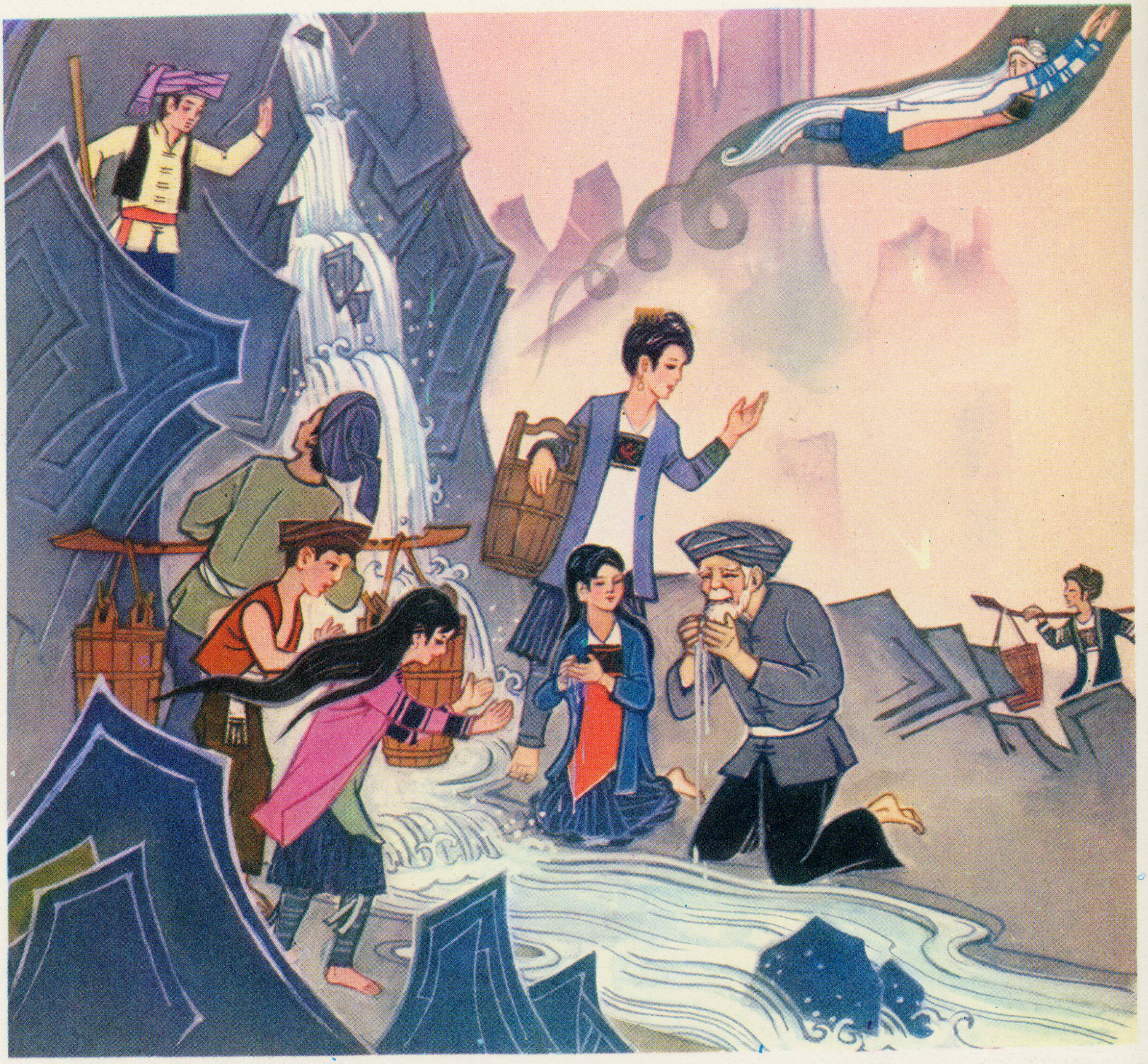
"The land is dried up, crops withered, the villagers have no water to drink . . ." she thought to herself. "Why should I keep silent, while they suffer so much? I must tell them the secret of the mountain spring."



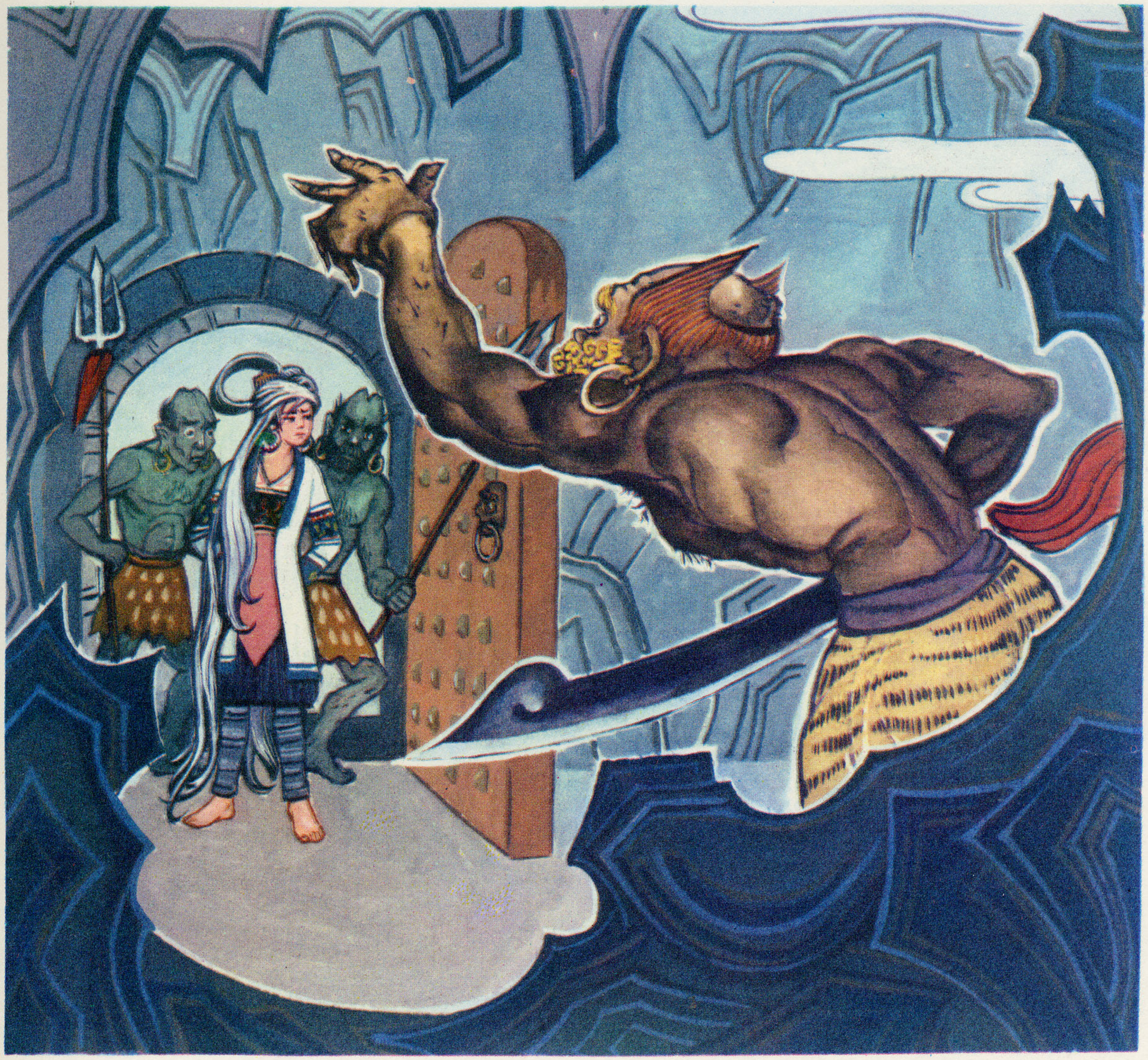
Finally the Long-Haired Maiden made up her mind. She ran through the whole village, trying to tell everybody: "Let's all go to the mountain! Up there I saw the opening of a mountain spring after I pulled out a turnip."



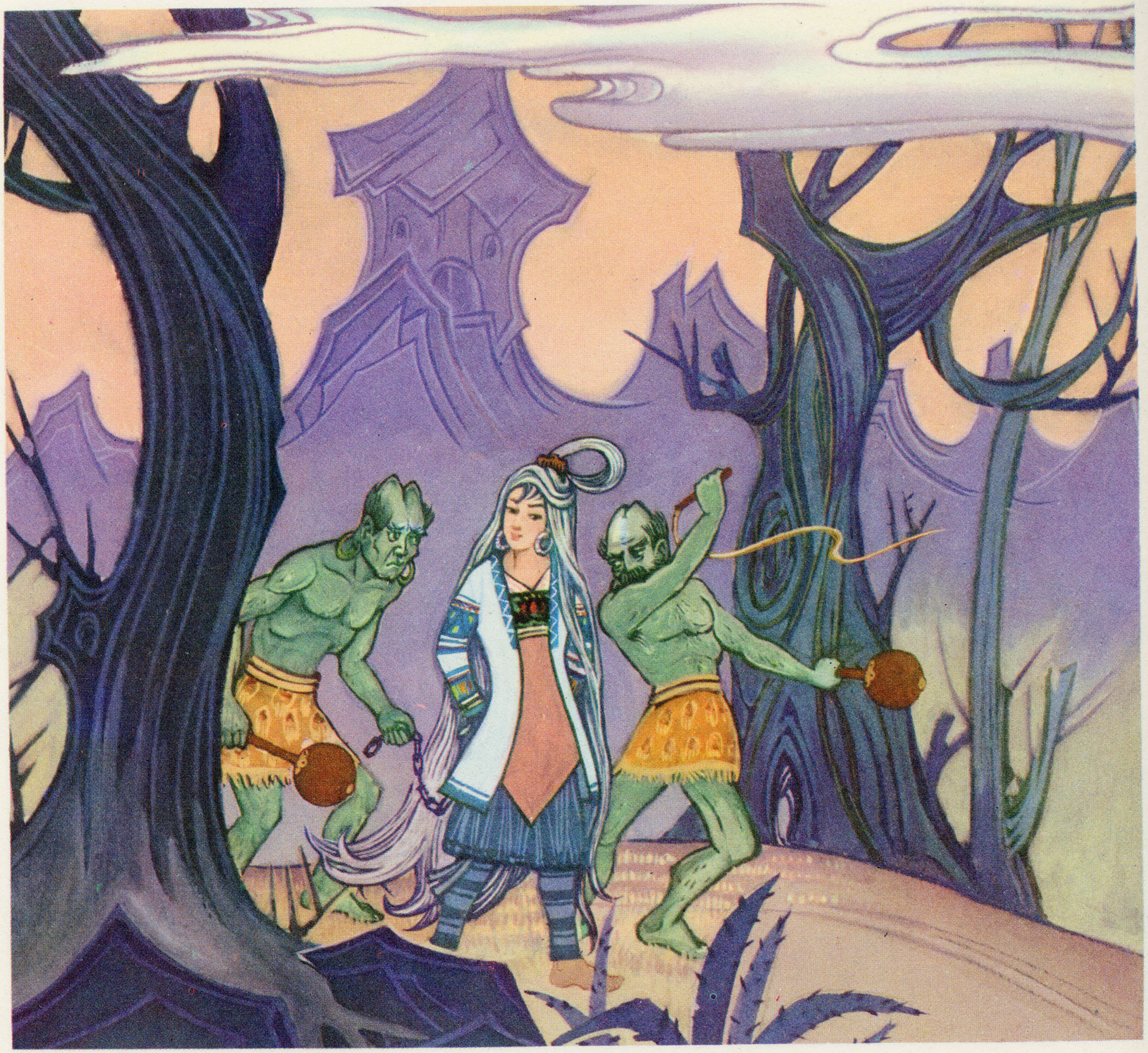
She led the villagers up the mountain, where she pulled out the turnip, which she asked them to chop up immediately.



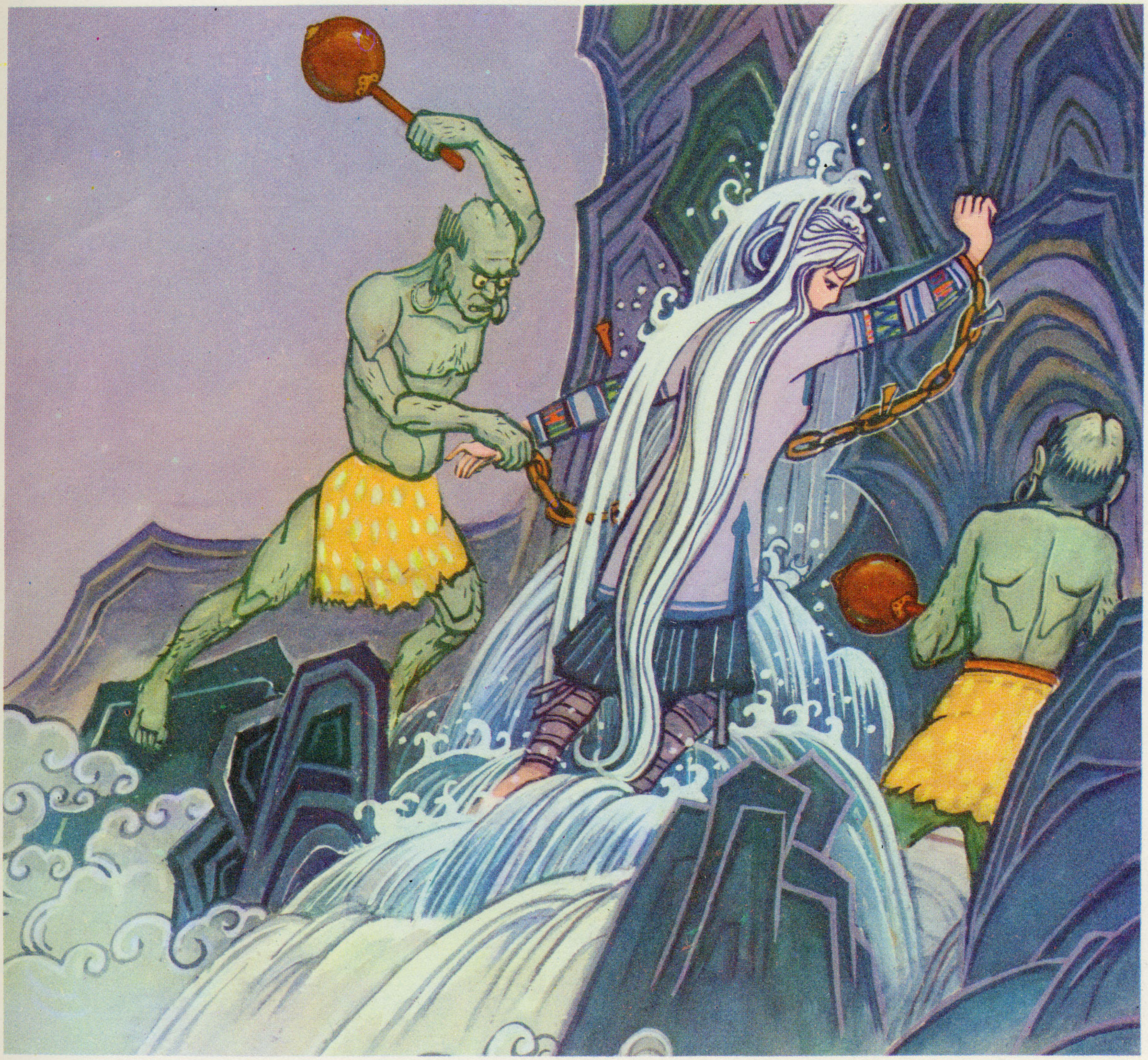
As the spring water gushed out from the hole down the slopes, the villagers clapped their hands in excitement and laughed till tears came up in their eyes.



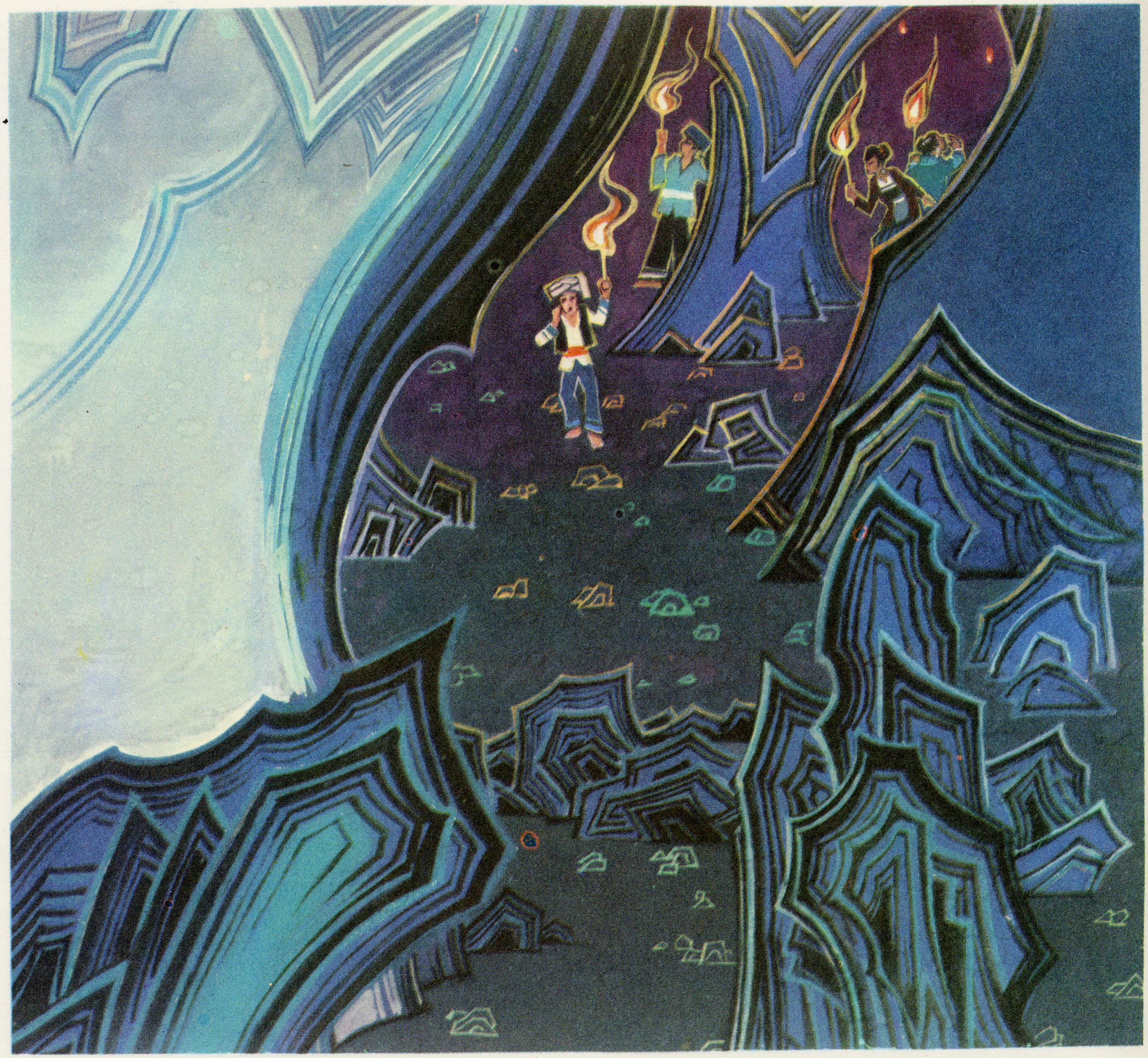
The villagers were too happy to have noticed the disappearance of the Long-Haired Maiden. She was again blown into the mountain cave by the Mountain God. "You've disobeyed my order and I'll put you to death," he said furiously. "I don't mind death as long as the villagers will have a good life from now on," she said firmly.



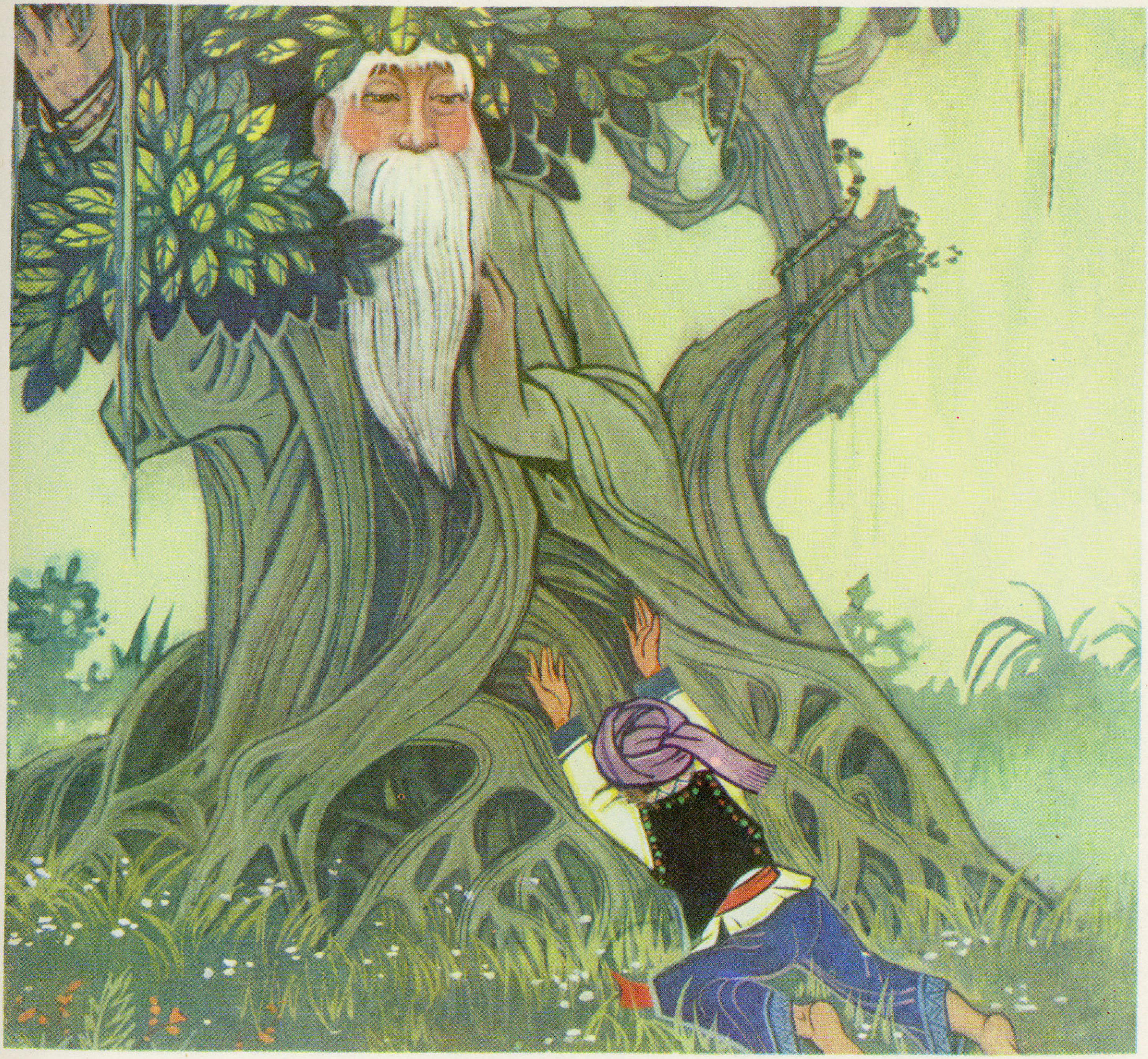
Hearing this the Mountain God flew into a rage. "I have a better punishment for you." He then ordered two fiends to tie up the Long-Haired Maiden with chains before placing her at the mouth of the spring.



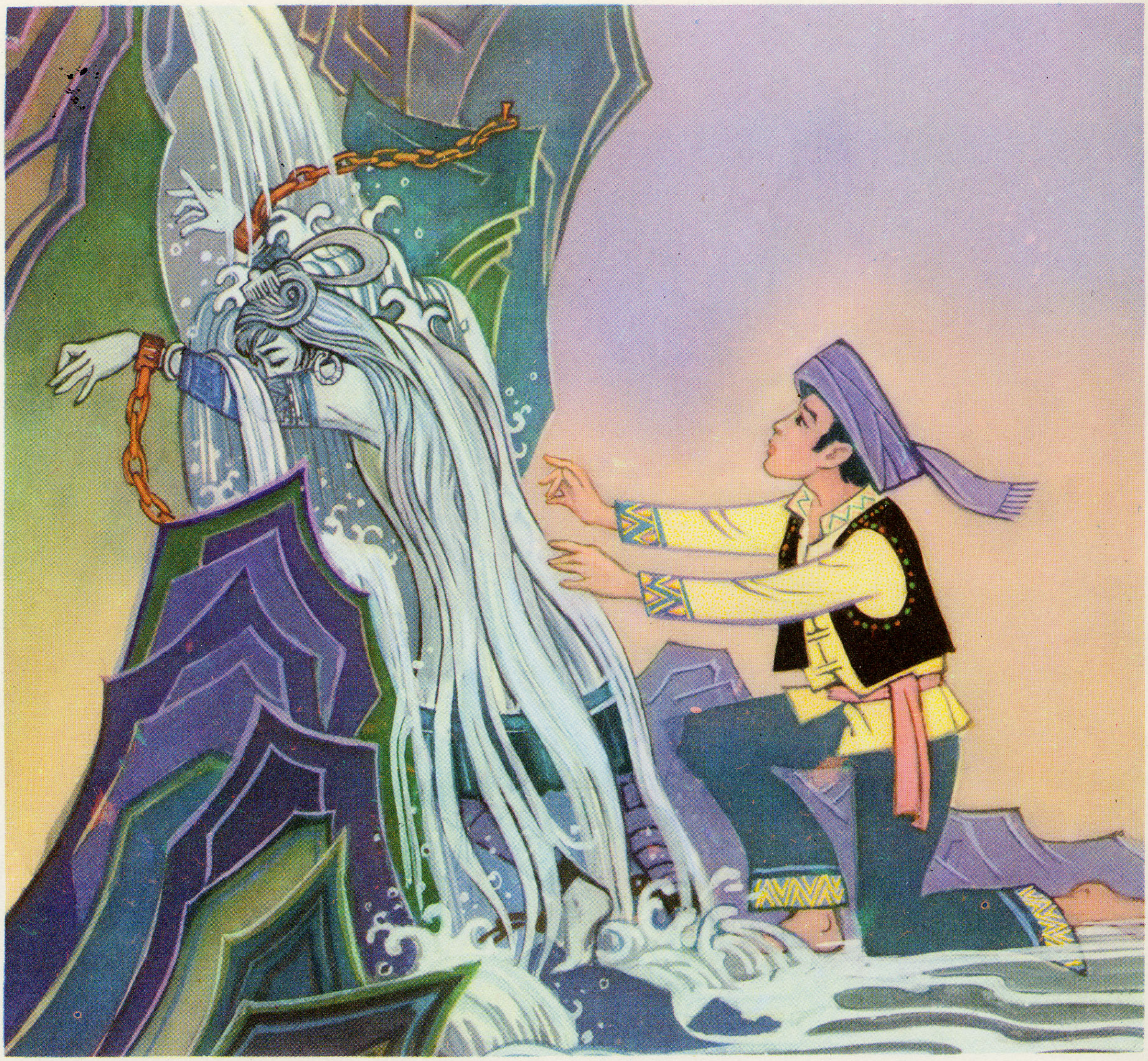
The Long-Haired Maiden gradually became unconscious as the strong water current poured over her head.



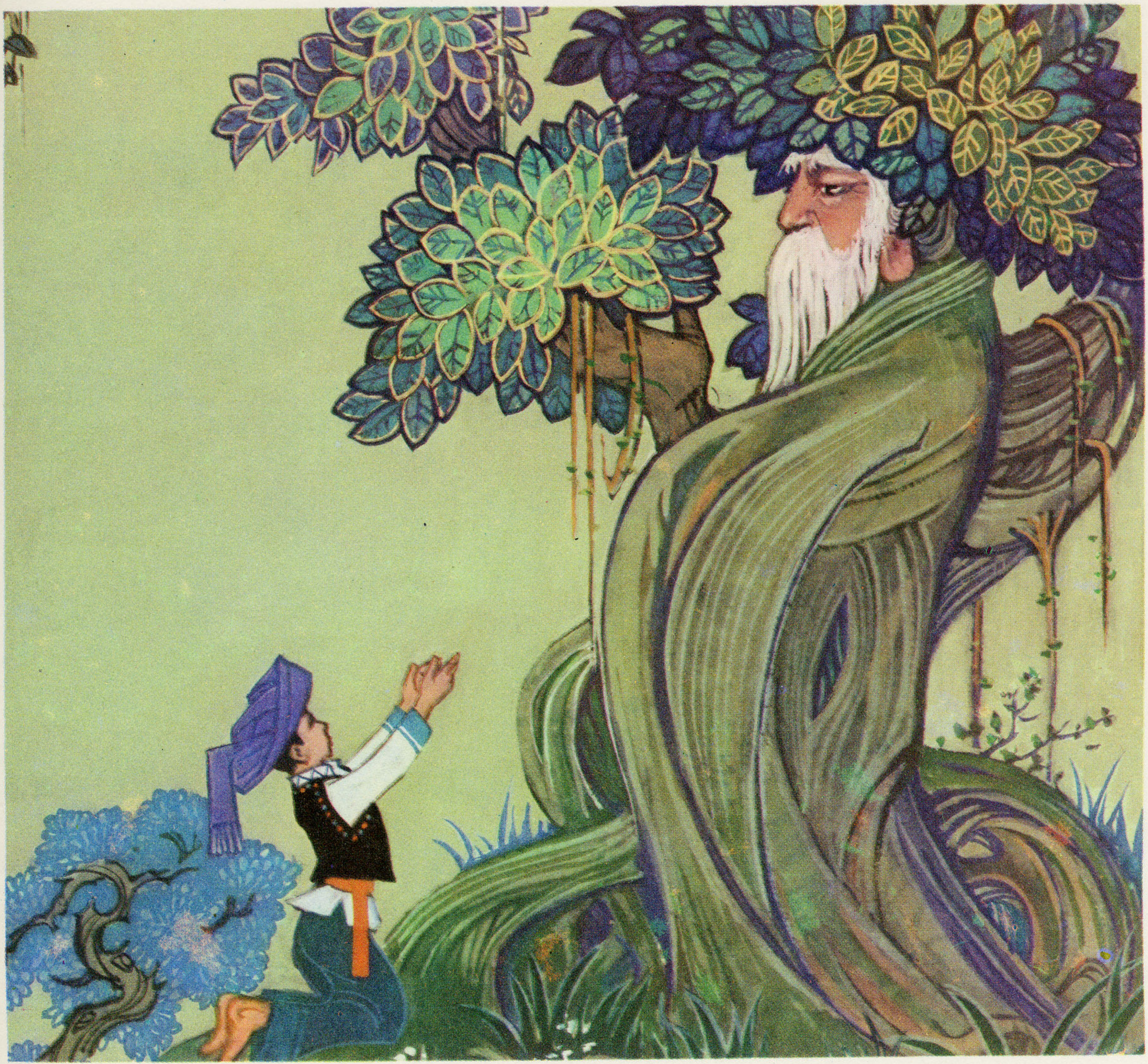
After they returned, the villagers found that the Long-Haired Maiden had disappeared. They looked and searched everywhere. "Long-Haired Maiden! Long-Haired Maiden!" they called. Only their calling echoed in the valley.



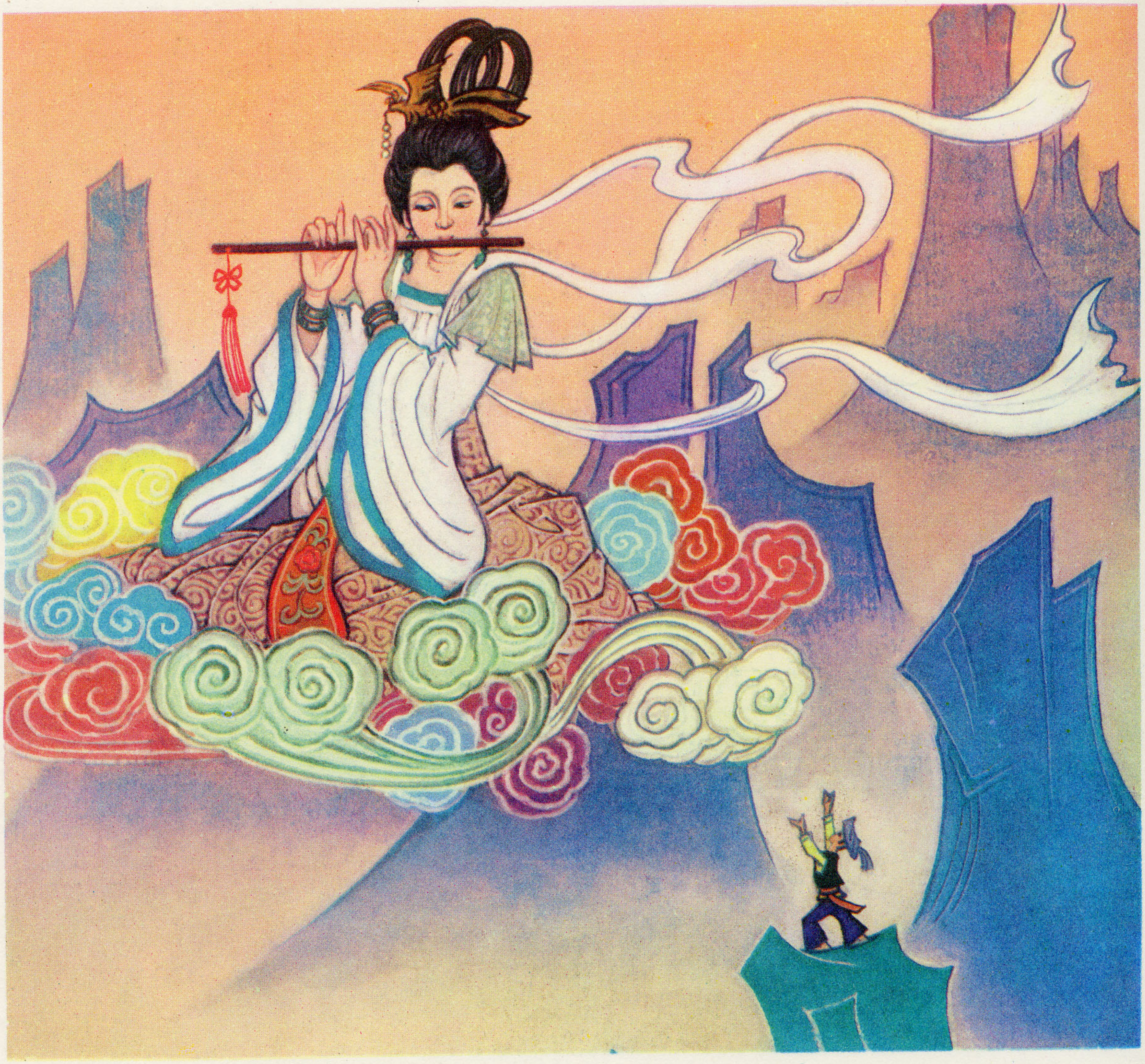
Xiao Yong, the young man who grew up together with the Long-Haired Maiden, felt specially distressed. Throwing himself upon an old banyan tree he cried: "Tell me please who has taken her away?" "It is the vicious Mountain God," replied the old banyan, "who is making her suffer now."



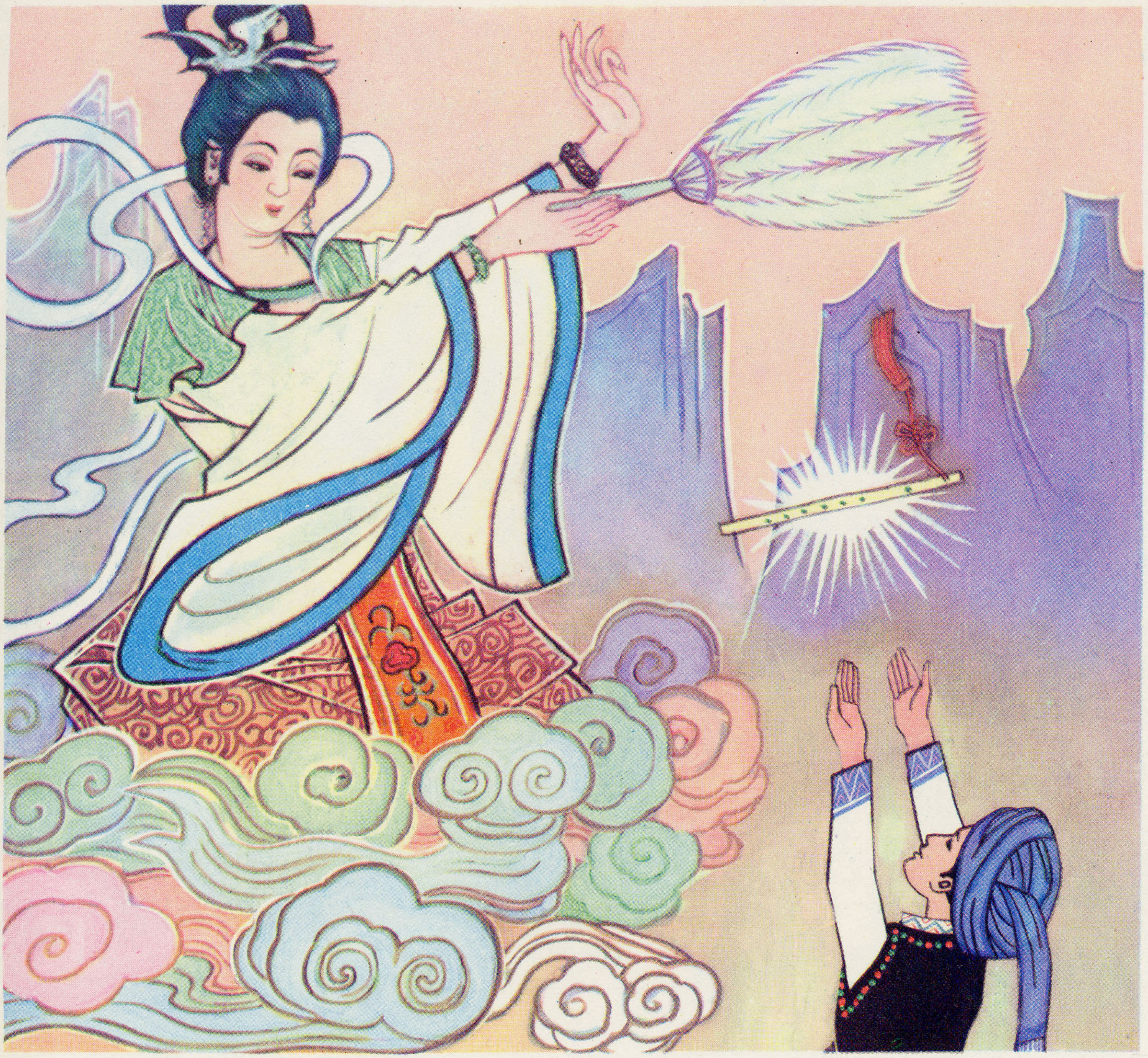
Desperately, Xiao Yong ran as fast as his legs could carry him in the direction as pointed out by the banyan tree. He found the Long-Haired Maiden, who by then had already been transformed into a stone statue.



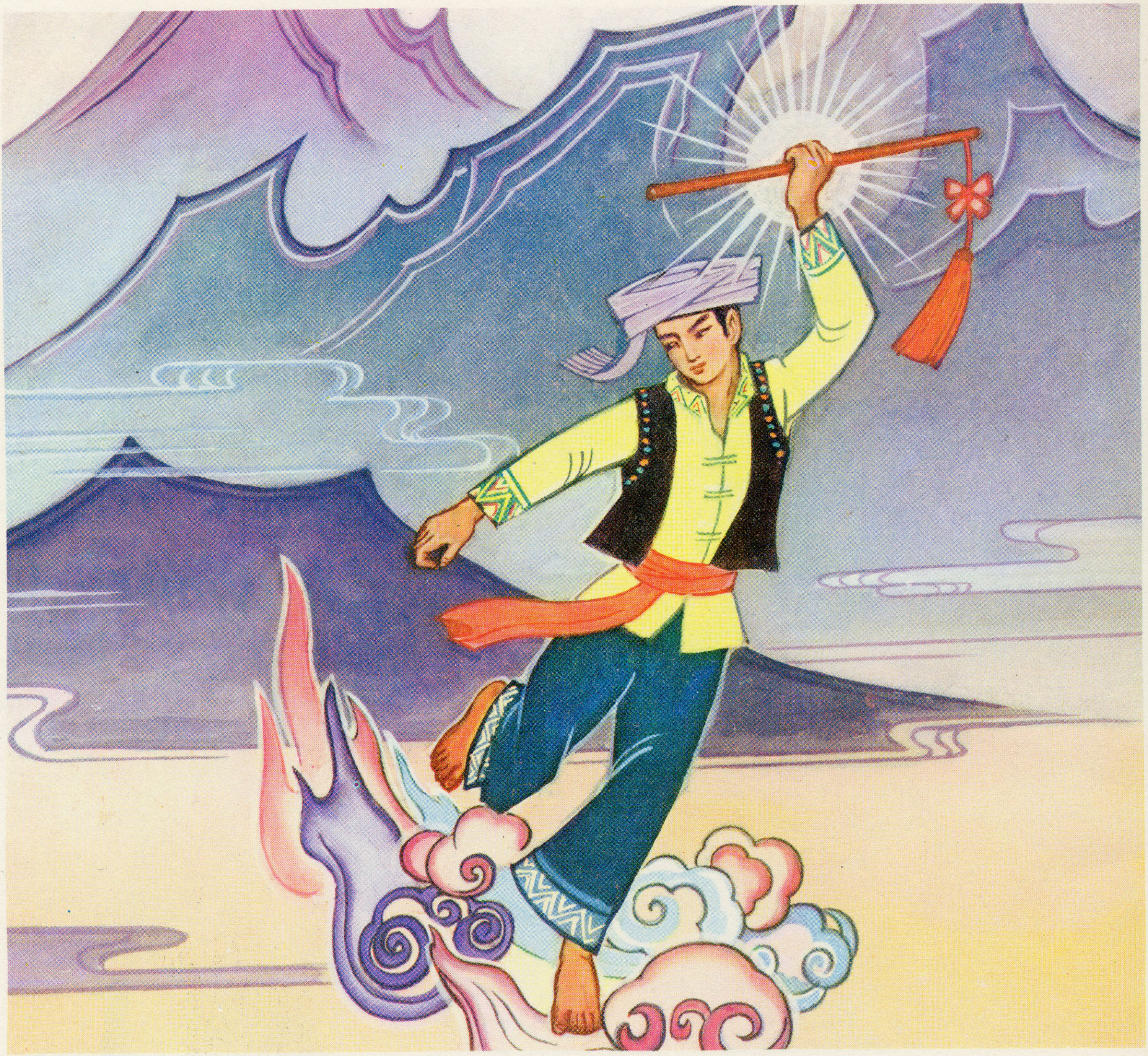
"I must avenge the Long-Haired Maiden," Xiao Yong said to himself. He ran back quickly from the mountain to find the old banyan tree for advice. "After you climb over ninety-nine mountains you will see a glossy ganoderma mountain," the old tree told him. "Borrow from the fairy there a magic flute, and that will surely subdue the vicious Mountain God."



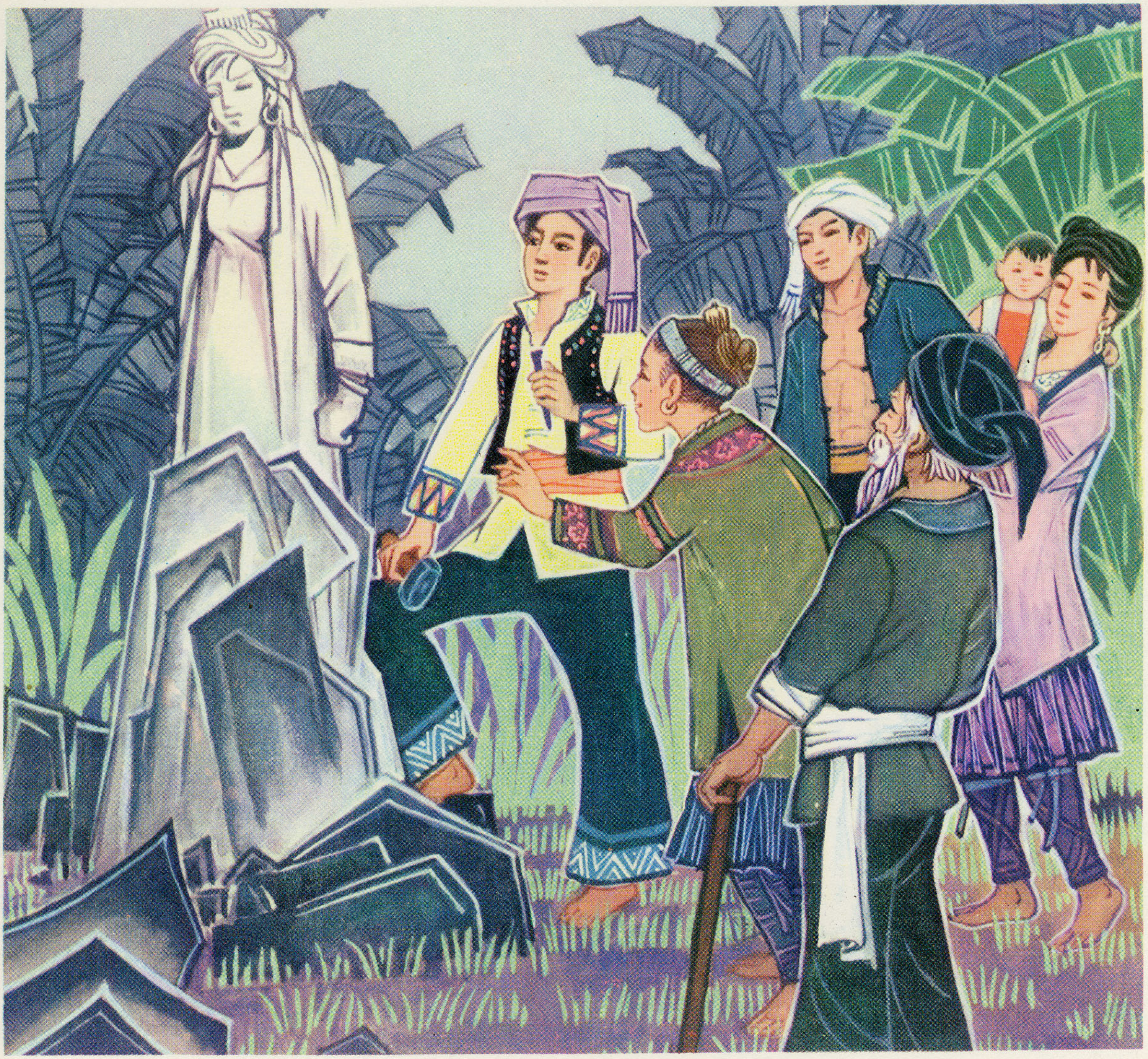
Defying all hardships, Xiao Yong climbed over altogether ninety-nine mountains before he finally reached the glossy ganoderma mountain. There he saw the beautiful fairy sitting in the clouds, playing the flute



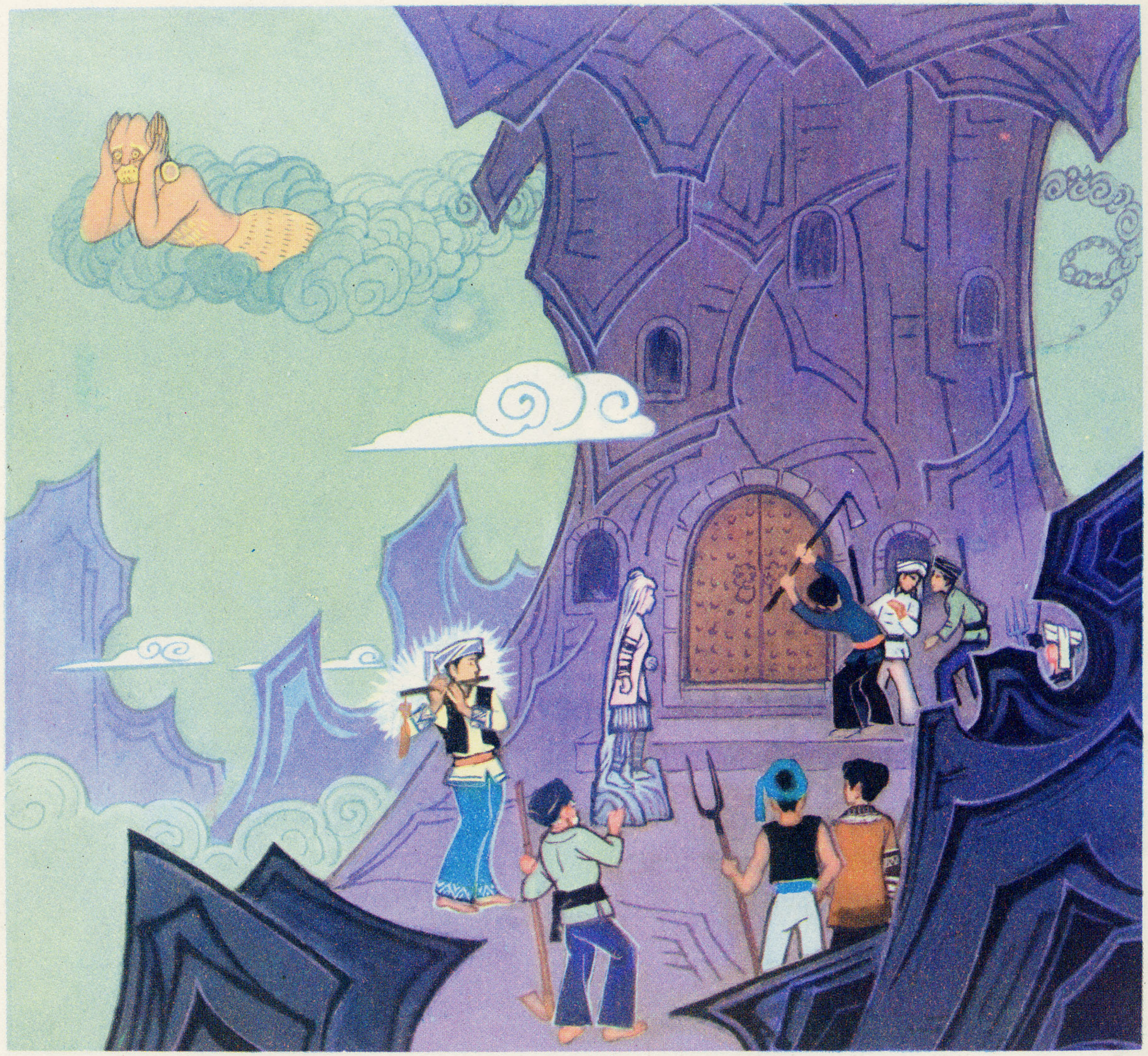
Knowing in advance the young man's story, the fairy said to him: "The magic flute can drive away the Mountain God only for a moment, my young hero. You have to use your own wisdom to keep him away permanently." She then handed the magic flute to Xiao Yong.



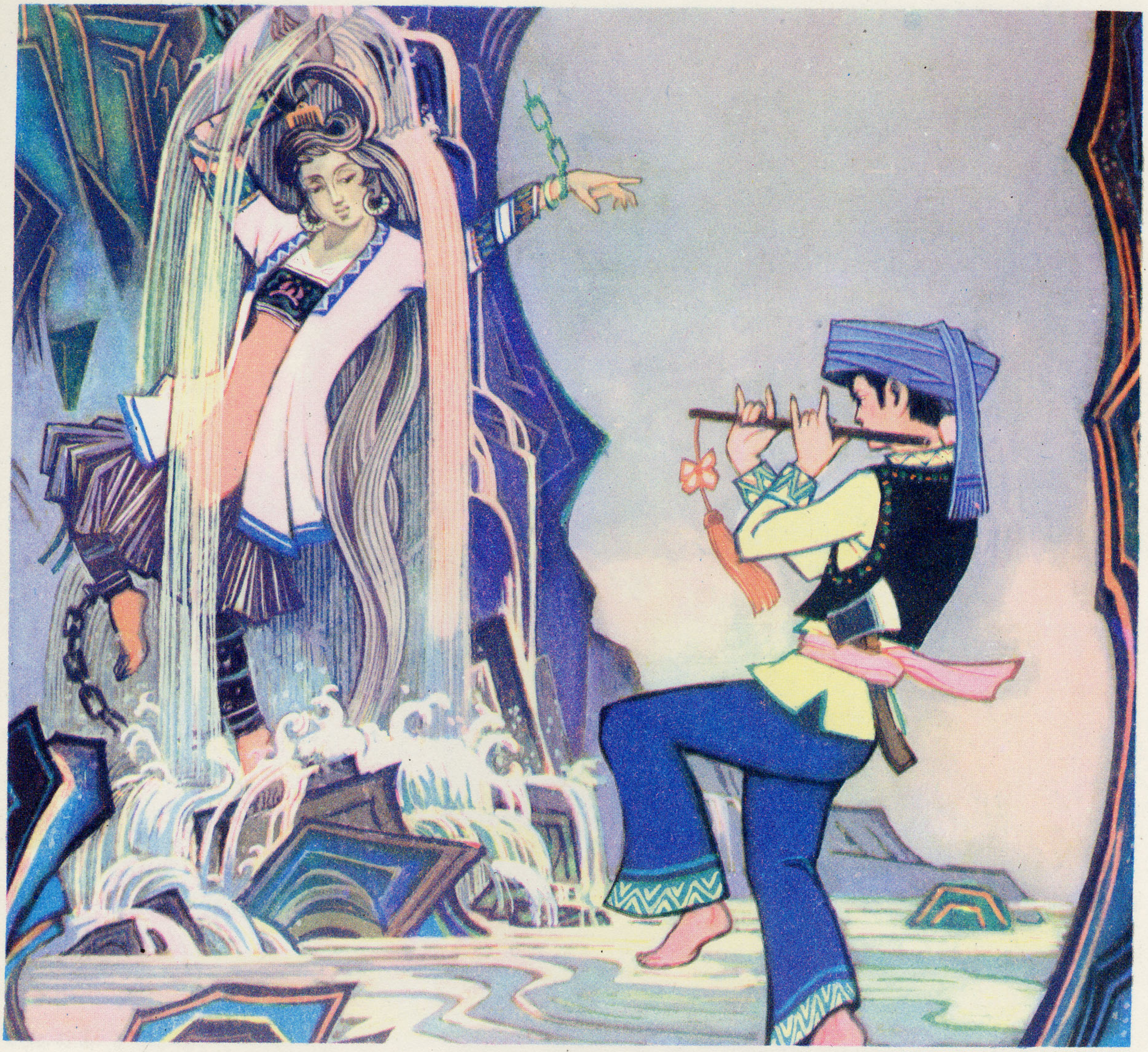
Then she took out a feather fan and waved it a few times. A white cloud appeared which lifted Xiao Yong up to the sky and then gently carried him home.



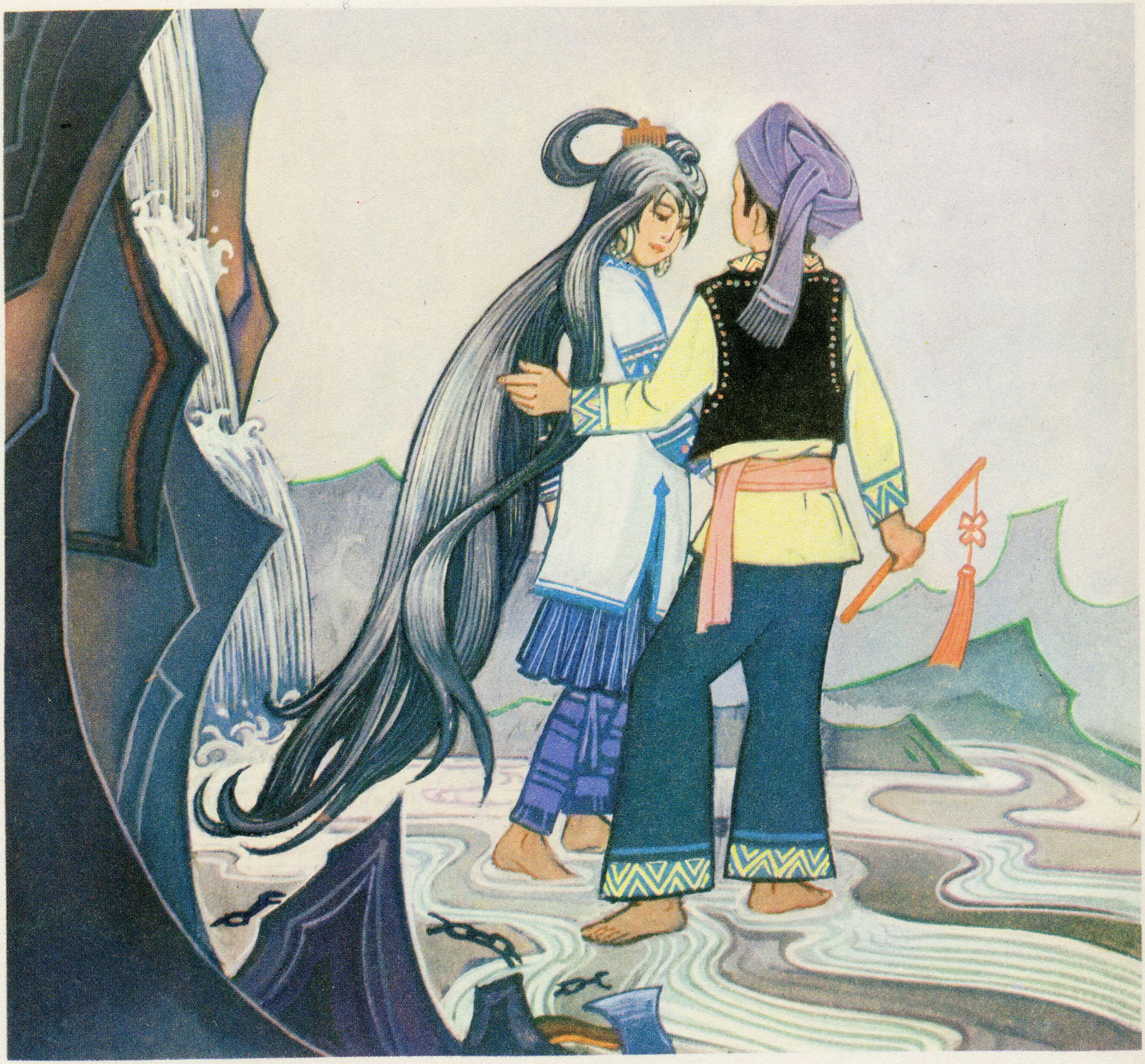
After he returned, Xiao Yong discussed with the villagers and they decided to make a substitution to replace the Long-Haired Maiden.



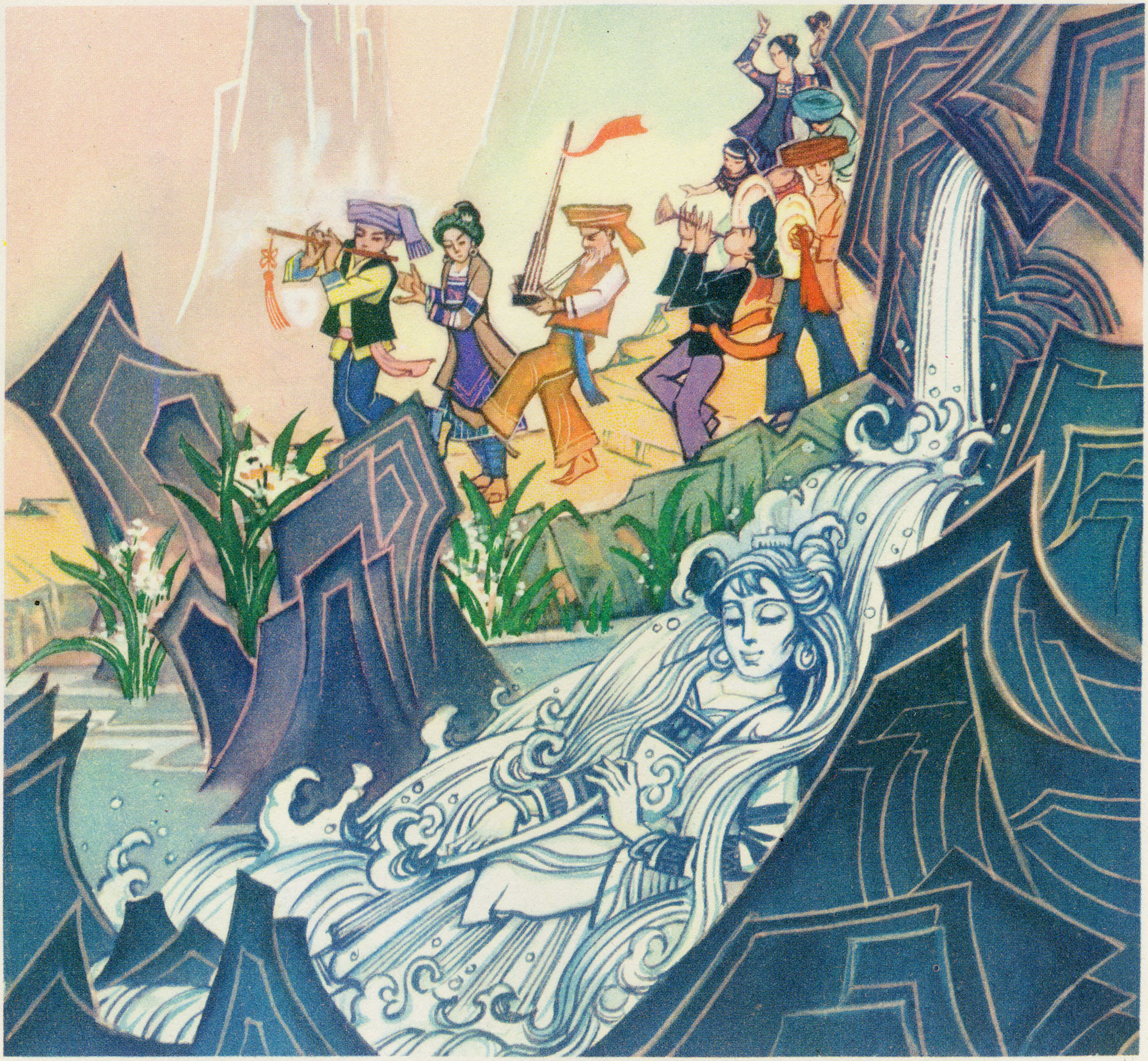
They made a stone statue and carried it up to the mountain cave where the Mountain God lived. Outside the cave Xiao Yong played the magic flute. As soon as he heard the sound the Mountain God fled away.



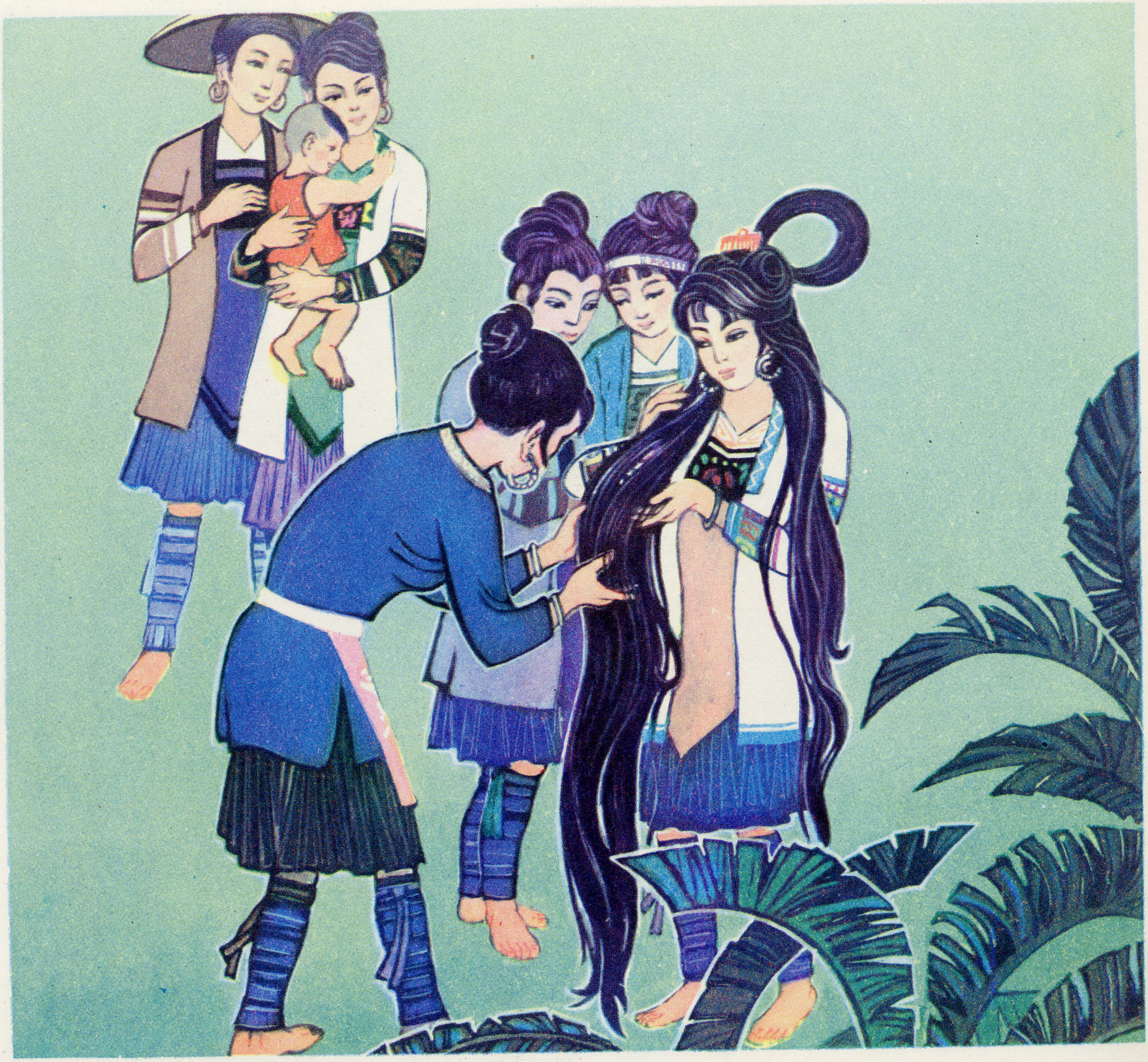
Xiao Yong led the villagers to the mouth of the spring. His melodious music woke up the Long-Haired Maiden, who slowly opened her eyes.



With a sharp hatchet Xiao Yong broke the chains and, with the greatest care, he helped the Long-Haired Maiden walk away from the spring and down the mountain.



Xiao Yong cut off the Long-Haired Maiden's white hair, which he placed on the head of the stone statue lest the Mountain God find out the truth. Strangely enough, the white hair took root on the stone head, and the stone figure lying in the water looked exactly like the Long-Haired Maiden herself.



The Long-Haired Maiden was pleasantly surprised to see that everything had worked out so well. Suddenly her head felt itchy and she touched it. Magically, dark and smooth hair came back to her, flowing gracefully over her shoulders and down to the ground. "That's the girl, a good girl of our Dong people!" the villagers cheered. For generations the Dong people have told and retold the story about how the Long-Haired Maiden brought them clear spring water.

中国民间故事
长 发 妹
丁宇真 改编
黄 景 绘画
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In order to free the villagers from a water shortage, the hardworking and upright Long-Haired Maiden revealed to them the secret location of a mountain spring. As a punishment for what she did the Mountain God turned her into a stone statue. Under the guidance of the banyan tree, her fellow villager, a brave young man named Xiao Yong, frightened the Mountain God away with a magic flute which he borrowed from a fairy. The Long-Haired Maiden was rescued and the mountain spring was destined to benefit the people forever.

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